



THE UNIVERSITY
of **NORTH CAROLINA**
at **CHAPEL HILL**

Results of Spring 2006 Surveys of Women Faculty

DRAFT

Prepared for:

The Committee on the Status of Women

Compiled by:

The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

March 2006

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The Committee on the Status of Women

Executive Summary

Background

During the spring semester of 2006, the Committee on the Status of Women at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill conducted a brief survey to learn more about the general concerns of female faculty in two categories: (1) tenure track assistant professors, and (2) fixed term faculty across all ranks. The questionnaire included a short list of issues that respondents were asked to rate and then rank in terms of the extent to which each topic was important to them personally. The topics involved family-related issues such as child care as well as concerns related to the work environment at the University. Slightly different versions of the survey were prepared for tenure track assistant professors and fixed term faculty. Both questionnaires included an open-ended item to encourage respondents to comment further on these or other issues of concern to them as faculty at UNC-Chapel Hill.

The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment administered the surveys by sending an email message from the Chair of the Committee on the Status of Women to all active full-time and part-time permanent female tenure track assistant professors and female fixed term faculty. The email message included a link to a web-based form that the recipients could complete online and submit their responses directly to a secure database in the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. Copies of the messages and survey instruments sent to the target populations are provided in Appendix A. After the initial mailing and one email reminder, 103 of the 149 (69%) tenure track assistant professors with valid email addresses had responded. Of the fixed term faculty, 268 of the 623 individuals with valid email addresses completed the survey, yielding a 43% response rate.¹

Results

Tenure Track Assistant Professors

As shown in Tables 1 and 2 below, the responses of this group of women faculty indicate that work environment issues were rated highest in importance among the concerns listed in this survey.² (Detailed item results are provided in Appendix B.) Tenure clock flexibility appeared to be of somewhat less importance to these respondents in relation to the other issues presented on the survey.

The responses to the open-ended questions provided some critical insights into these ratings and rankings. Some respondents stated that all of these issues are important, and that it was not really possible to place them in rank order. A number of respondents pointed out that the four issues listed on the survey are all highly interrelated for most professionals, particularly in the early years of their lives/careers. These respondents explained that a supportive work

¹ Three tenure track assistant professors had missing email addresses (2.0%) and twenty-three fixed term faculty had either no email address or one that proved to be undeliverable (3.5%).

² Several respondents questioned the specific definition of "work environment" used for this survey.

environment is actually the result of family-friendly policies, adequate resources for child care, good mentoring relationships, and flexibility in tenure timetables. The comments also revealed related issues that impact job satisfaction. For example, faculty with small children pointed out that parking problems are intimately tied to child care issues, with many parents having difficulties getting to their cars to respond to the needs of children in off-campus daycare placements. The full text of the comments made by the tenure track assistant professor survey respondents are listed in Appendix C of this document.

Table 1: Tenure Track Assistant Professors						
Rate each of the following issues in terms of their importance to you personally						
	Not at all important	Not too important	Somewhat important	Very important	Extremely important	
	%	%	%	%	%	Median*
Tenure-clock flexibility	4	13	27	32	24	4
Work environment	1	0	5	30	64	5
Child care / family	4	9	16	19	52	5
Mentoring / Networking	1	5	12	38	44	4

**Median based on scale of 1-5 with 1="Not at all important" and 5="Extremely important."*

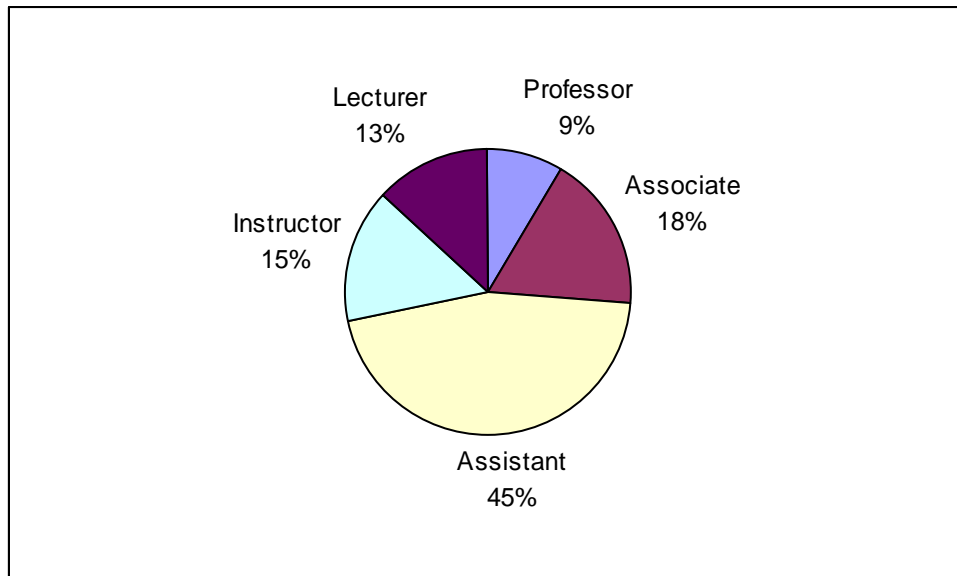
Table 2: Tenure Track Assistant Professors					
Rank order these four issues with 1 = the most important issue for you, 2 = the second most important issue, etc.					
	Most important issue	Second most important issue	Third most important issue	Fourth most important issue	
	%	%	%	%	Median
Tenure-clock flexibility	16	13	35	36	3
Work environment	38	40	17	5	2
Child care / family	26	26	21	27	2
Mentoring / Networking	21	27	26	26	3

**Median based on scale of 1-4 with 1="Most important issue" and 4="Fourth most important issue."*

Fixed Term Faculty

The respondents to the female fixed term faculty survey were roughly similar to the population in terms of their distribution across academic ranks. About three-quarters of respondents with fixed term appointments hold the rank of assistant professor or below, as shown in Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1:
Female Fixed Term Faculty Survey Respondents by Rank**



Tables 3 and 4 below indicate that pay equity, the work environment, and job security issues received the highest ratings of importance from fixed term faculty. However, the importance ratings differed by academic rank, which is generally correlated with age and life stage. Table 5 provides the median importance ratings for each item by academic rank. Professors as a group rated child care issues as less important to them than did junior faculty, as might be expected. Detailed results by item and by rank are displayed in Appendix D.

	Not at all important	Not too important	Somewhat important	Very important	Extremely important	Median*
	%	%	%	%	%	
Job security	0	1	12	37	50	4
Pay equity	0	1	6	31	62	5
Work environment	0	0	6	46	48	4
Mentoring / networking	1	4	24	42	29	4
Child care / family	16	14	21	22	27	3

**Median based on scale of 1-5 with 1="Not at all important" and 5="Extremely important." Responses were weighted by rank.*

Table 4: Fixed Term Faculty Rank order these five issues with 1 = the most important issue for you, 2 = the second most important issue, etc.						
	Most important issue	Second most important issue	Third most important issue	Fourth most important issue	Fifth most important issue	
	%	%	%	%	%	Median*
Job security	34	23	21	16	6	2
Pay equity	27	34	21	13	5	2
Work environment	19	23	31	22	6	3
Mentoring / Networking	7	11	17	41	24	4
Child care / family	20	12	10	6	53	5
<i>*Median based on scale of 1-5 with 1="Most important issue" and 5="Fifth most important issue." Responses were weighted by rank.</i>						

Table 5: Fixed Term Faculty Median Importance Ratings by Rank*					
	Professor	Associate	Assistant	Instructor	Lecturer
Pay equity	5	5	5	5	5
Work environment	5	5	4	4.5	5
Job security	4	5	4	4	5
Mentoring/Networking	4	4	4	4	4
Child care/family	2	3	4	4	3
<i>*Median based on scale of 1-5 with 1="Not at all important" and 5="Extremely important." Responses were weighted by rank.</i>					

The responses to the open-ended question suggested that fixed term faculty have a somewhat different set of issues and concerns than tenure track assistant professors. Many of the issues raised were more related to the status and role of fixed term faculty in general and were not gender-specific. However, a couple of respondents commented that the problems of fixed term faculty and women faculty were related in many ways, since the fixed term ranks contain a higher proportion of women than the tenure track ranks.

A number of respondents indicated that they had chosen fixed term positions – particularly those with options for part-time schedules – in order to enjoy a level of flexibility in balancing family responsibilities with academic life that would not be possible in most tenure track positions. However, respondents described many disadvantages of that role. These included perceptions of being “second class citizens” within their departments, and of being used primarily to relieve tenured faculty of duties that they disliked or considered to be of lesser importance. While several respondents acknowledged that a fixed term appointment by definition provided no guarantees for long-term job security, they suggested that some explicit standards and means for advancement within the ranks of the fixed term category would be highly motivating. Mentoring opportunities were described as extremely limited, and those who were interested in moving into a tenure track position reported finding few sources of support or guidance among the senior tenured faculty. In nearly every area, from parking to funds to attend professional meetings, fixed term faculty indicated that they were given the lowest priority within the department, even after many years of service. The full text of the comments made by fixed term faculty respondents sorted by rank can be reviewed in Appendix E.

For more information or to request additional analyses, please contact Lynn Williford in the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (962-1339 or lynn_williford@unc.edu).

Appendix A:
Cover Letters and Web Survey Forms

Committee on the Status of Women Survey of Assistant Professors

The Committee on the Status of Women is very interested in identifying and addressing the specific concerns and needs of women who are assistant professors at UNC-Chapel Hill. Given the demands on your time and the difficulty of getting together in one physical place, we've opted to ask you to participate in a brief survey.

The survey covers several general issues. We ask that you rate these concerns in terms of their importance to you. For example, child care is clearly an important issue for the University community, but is this issue a concern for you personally? We also invite you to make additional comments on these issues and to identify other topics of concern to you as a faculty member at UNC-Chapel Hill. Your responses will enter a secure database in the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. Staff in that office will aggregate the responses and provide a summary report to the Committee on the Status of Women. At no point will identifiable information be presented or revealed. The Committee (Susan Lord, Beth Holmgren, Zari Kamarei, Keith Muller, Barbara Osborne, and Margot Stein) will review the issues raised by the survey results and propose a series of consequent action steps to discuss with the Provost in early April.

We need your response by March 28, 2006. Thank you for your cooperation.

Susan Lord
Chair, Committee on the Status of Women

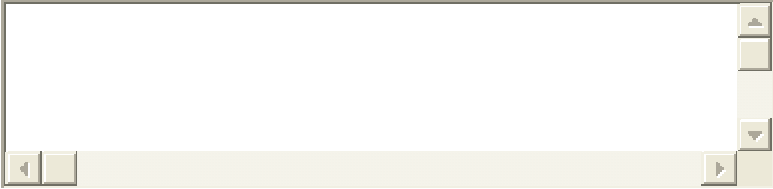
1. Please rate each of the following issues in terms of their importance to you personally.

	Importance to you				
	Not at all important	Not too important	Somewhat important	Very important	Extremely important
Tenure-clock flexibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child care and other family responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional mentoring/networking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Please rank order these four issues with 1 = the most important issue for you, 2 = the second most important issue for you, and so forth. If an issue is of no concern to you at all, do not rank it.

- Tenure-clock flexibility
- Work environment
- Child care and other family responsibilities
- Professional mentoring/networking

3. In the space below, please elaborate on any of the above topics, or describe any other areas of concern for you that are not listed here. (Note: The space will expand as you type.)



We thank you for your time and interest in facilitating our mission.

Submit

Committee on the Status of Women Survey of Fixed-Term Faculty

The Committee on the Status of Women is very interested in identifying and addressing the specific concerns and needs of women in fixed-term faculty positions at UNC-Chapel Hill. Given the demands on your time and the difficulty of getting together in one physical place, we've opted to ask you to participate in a brief survey.

The survey covers several general issues. We ask that you rate these concerns in terms of their importance to you. For example, child care is clearly an important issue for the University community, but is this issue a concern for you personally? We also invite you to make additional comments on these issues and to identify other topics of concern to you as a faculty member at UNC-Chapel Hill. Your responses will enter a secure database in the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. Staff in that office will aggregate the responses and provide a summary report to the Committee on the Status of Women. At no point will identifiable information be presented or revealed. The Committee (Susan Lord, Beth Holmgren, Zari Kamarei, Keith Muller, Barbara Osborne, and Margot Stein) will review the issues raised by the survey results and propose a series of consequent action steps to discuss with the Provost in early April.

We need your response by March 28, 2006. Thank you for your cooperation.

Susan Lord
Chair, Committee on the Status of Women

1. What is your academic rank?

- Professor
- Associate
- Assistant
- Instructor
- Lecturer

2. Please rate each of the following issues in terms of their importance to you.

	Importance to you				
	Not at all important	Not too important	Somewhat important	Very important	Extremely important
Job security	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pay equity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional mentoring/networking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child care and other family responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Please rank order these five issues with 1 = the most important issue for you, 2 = the second most important issue for you, and so forth. If an issue is of no concern to you at all, do not rank it.

- Job security
- Pay equity
- Work environment
- Professional mentoring/networking
- Child care and other family responsibilities

4. In the space below, please elaborate on any of the above topics, or describe any other areas of concern for you that are not listed here. (Note: The space will expand as you type.)

We thank you for your time and interest in facilitating our mission.