

Experiences and Satisfaction of Pre-Tenure Faculty: Results of the COACHE Survey

Orientation for New Heads and
Academic Leaders

August 7, 2007

Focusing on Pre-Tenure Faculty

- The Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) Survey is conducted by the Harvard Graduate School of Education
- Survey measures the institutional experiences and job satisfaction of full-time, pre-tenure faculty
- 221 tenure-track faculty hired at VT before Jan 2006 were surveyed in fall-spring 2006-07

COACHE Survey Overview

- Results provide:
 - Descriptive statistics and significant differences within institution by gender and race; descriptive statistics by academic area
 - Ranking compared to 5 selected peer institutions
 - Comparisons of mean scores to all 54 *university* participants in COACHE
 - overall, gender, race, and discipline

COACHE Survey Overview

- Survey questions focus on five major themes (number of items per theme):
 - Tenure (19)
 - Nature of Work (17)
 - Policies and Practices (22)
 - Climate, Culture, and Collegiality (10)
 - Global Satisfaction (5)

Selected Peer Institutions

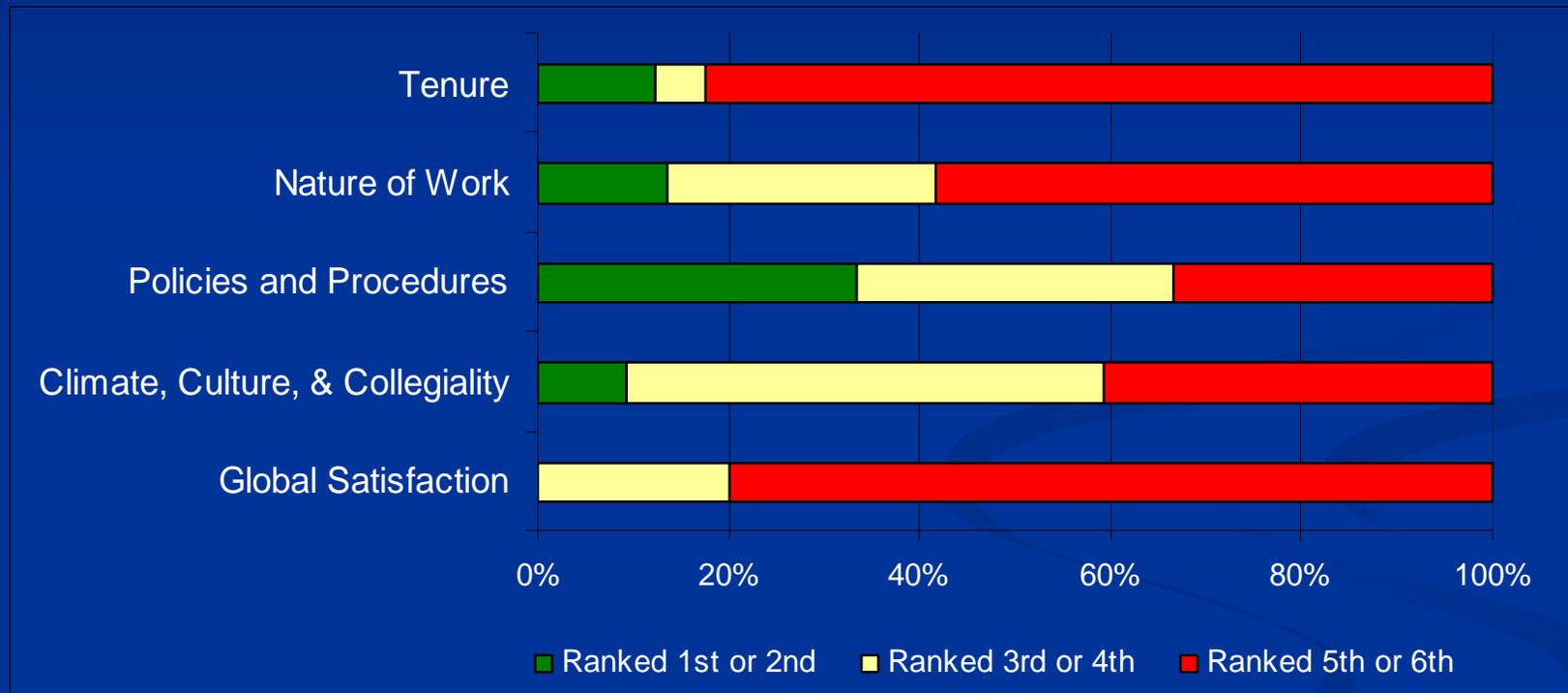
Virginia Tech chose five peer institutions to compare survey results:

- Iowa State University
- Michigan State University
- North Carolina State University
- Ohio State University
- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Virginia Tech COACHE Response Rates

	Virginia Tech			All Universities
	Total Population	Responses	Response Rate	Response Rate
Overall	211	157	71%	59%
Men	130	90	69%	55%
Women	91	67	74%	64%
White	150	115	77%	61%
Fac. of Color	71	42	59%	56%

Virginia Tech's Profile By Theme



Major Themes from the Survey Data for New Department Heads

- Transparency of the Tenure Process
- Satisfaction with Work-Life Policies and Attitudes about Work-Life Responsibilities
- Policies and Practices Related to Tenure and Work-Life
- Collegiality Within the Department
- Global Satisfaction

Transparency of the Tenure Process

- Junior faculty report relatively favorable views in relation to insights from colleagues and believe tenure decisions are made based on performance.

	% Agree*	% Disagree*	Peer Rank	National Rank
I have received consistent messages from senior colleagues about the requirements for tenure.	58	36	1 st	83%
In my opinion, tenure decisions here are made primarily on performance-based criteria (e.g., research/creative work, teaching, and/or service) rather than on non-performance based criteria (policies, relationships, and/or demographics).	75	17	1 st	87%

*Percentage does not equal 100% due to respondents who selected neither agree nor disagree

Transparency of the Tenure Process

- VT is low among peer group, but at about the mean for all participating universities on these questions.

	% Clear*	% Unclear*	Peer Rank	National Rank
I find the tenure process in my department to be	72	16	5 th	59%
I find the tenure criteria (what things are evaluated) in my department to be	70	21	5 th	50%
I find the tenure standards (the performance threshold) to be	51	30	4 th	44%
I find the body of evidence that will be considered in making my tenure decisions	60	20	5 th	52%

*Percentage does not equal 100% due to respondents who selected neither clear nor unclear

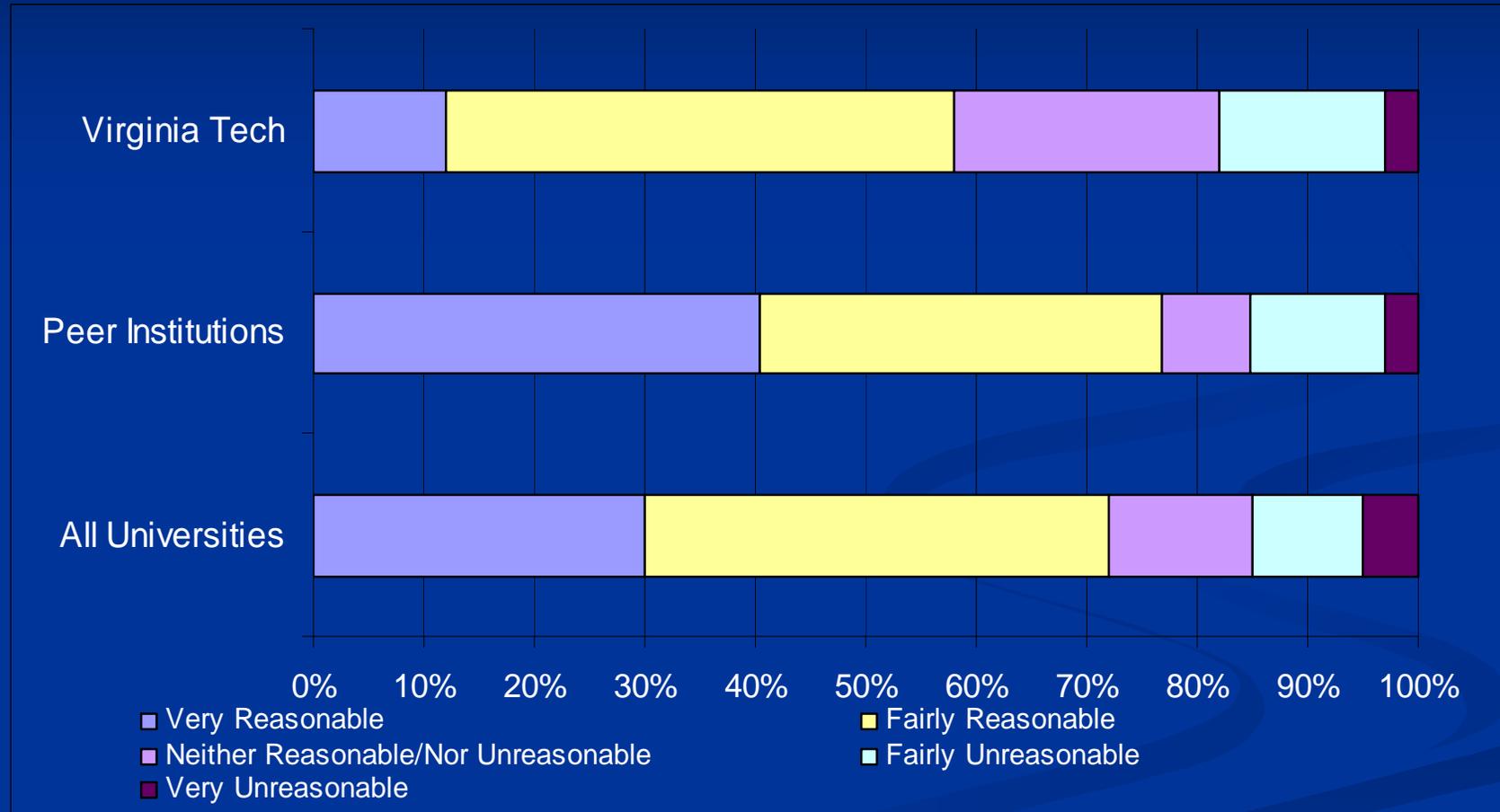
My sense of whether or not I will achieve tenure is...

- Percent Very or Fairly UNCLEAR about own chances for tenure

	VT	Peers	All Universities
Overall*	21%	10%	14%
Males	16%	7%	12%
Females	27%	13%	17%
White Faculty	23%	11%	15%
Fac of Color	14%	6%	12%

*VT ranked in the 9th percentile of all universities on this question

Perceived Reasonableness of Expectations as a Scholar

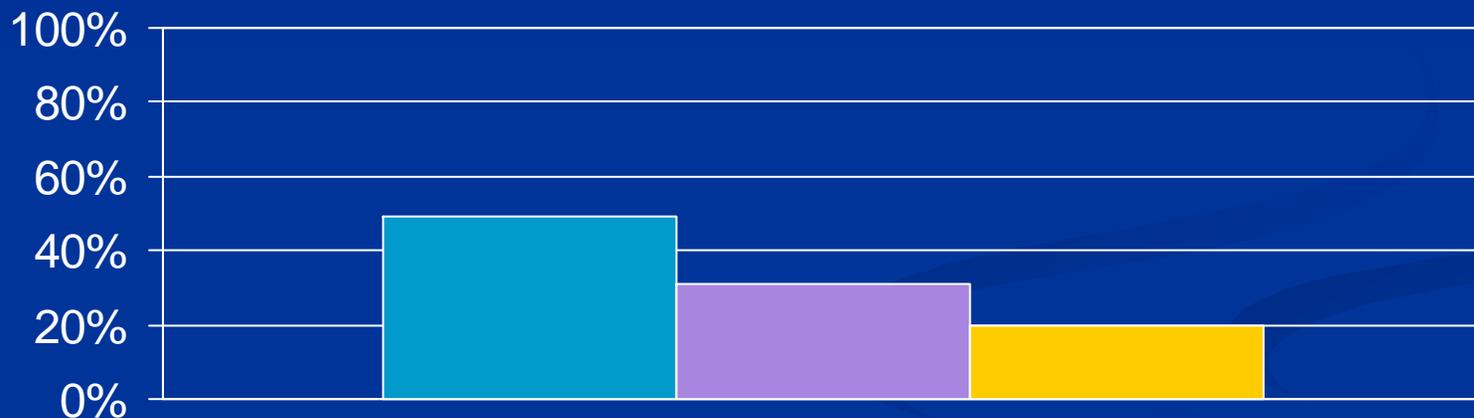


Disciplinary Differences for Tenure Questions

- Those faculty in the biological sciences, social sciences, engineering/math/comp sci, and education had higher mean scores on clarity of what is expected for tenure.
- Those respondents in architecture/bldg cons, veterinary medicine, and humanities had especially low scores on tenure questions.
- Responses from humanities scholars ranked very low compared to disciplinary peers at all universities. (10 out of 17 tenure questions were ranked below the 20th percentile).
- Not enough respondents in business, phys sci, visual and perf arts to make internal or external comparisons.

Satisfaction with Work-Life Policies

- VT is ranked very favorably (93rd percentile; 2nd among peers) on *institutional* support for balancing children and tenure track, but scores for all universities are low.



My institution does what it can to make having children and the tenure track compatible.

■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Neither Agree/Nor Disagree

Attitudes about Work-Life Responsibilities

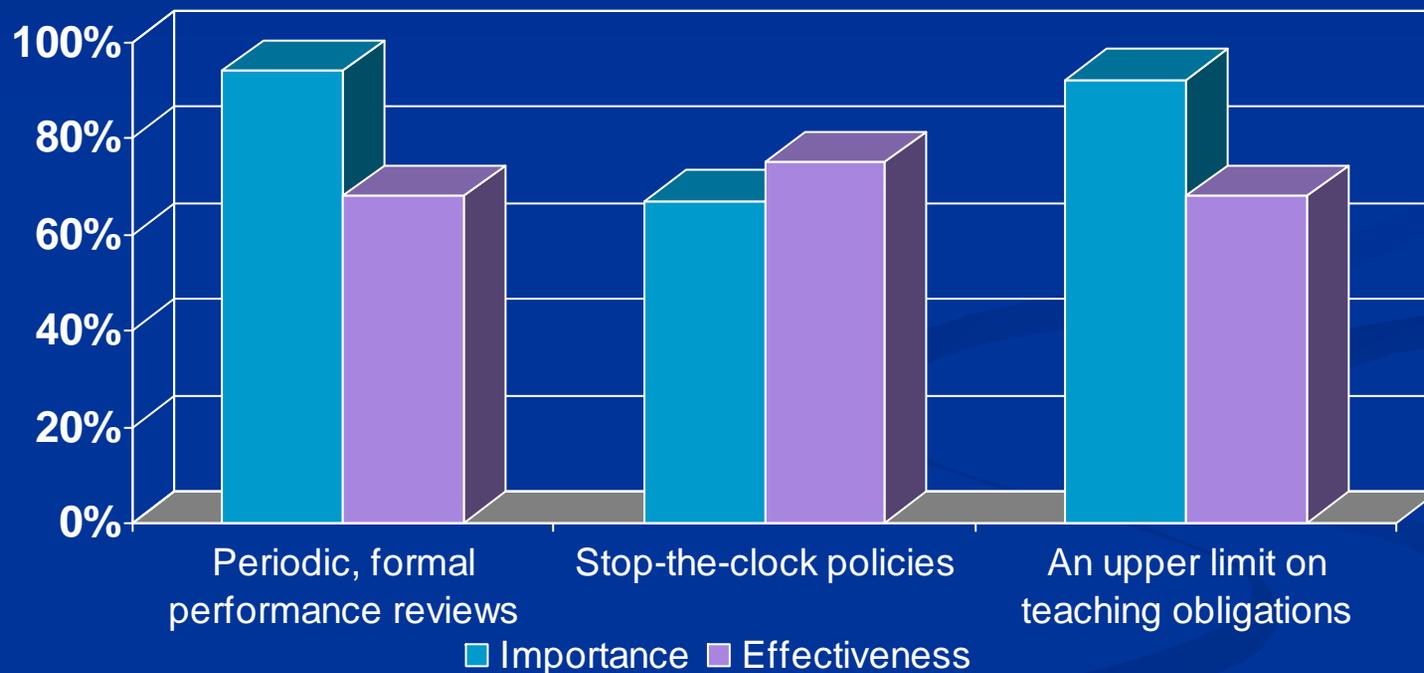
- Males were more satisfied than females with the balance they are able to strike between professional and personal time.

	% Agree*	% Disagree*	Peer Rank	National Rank
My departmental colleagues do what they can to make <i>having</i> children and the tenure track compatible.	53	23	4 th	37%
My departmental colleagues do what they can to make <i>raising</i> children and the tenure track compatible.	49	25	5 th	30%
	% Satisfied	% Unsatisfied*		
How satisfied are you with the balance between professional time and personal or family time.**	34	48	6 th	24%

*Percentage does not equal 100% due to respondents who selected neither agree nor disagree, neither satisfied nor unsatisfied; ** significant differences by gender

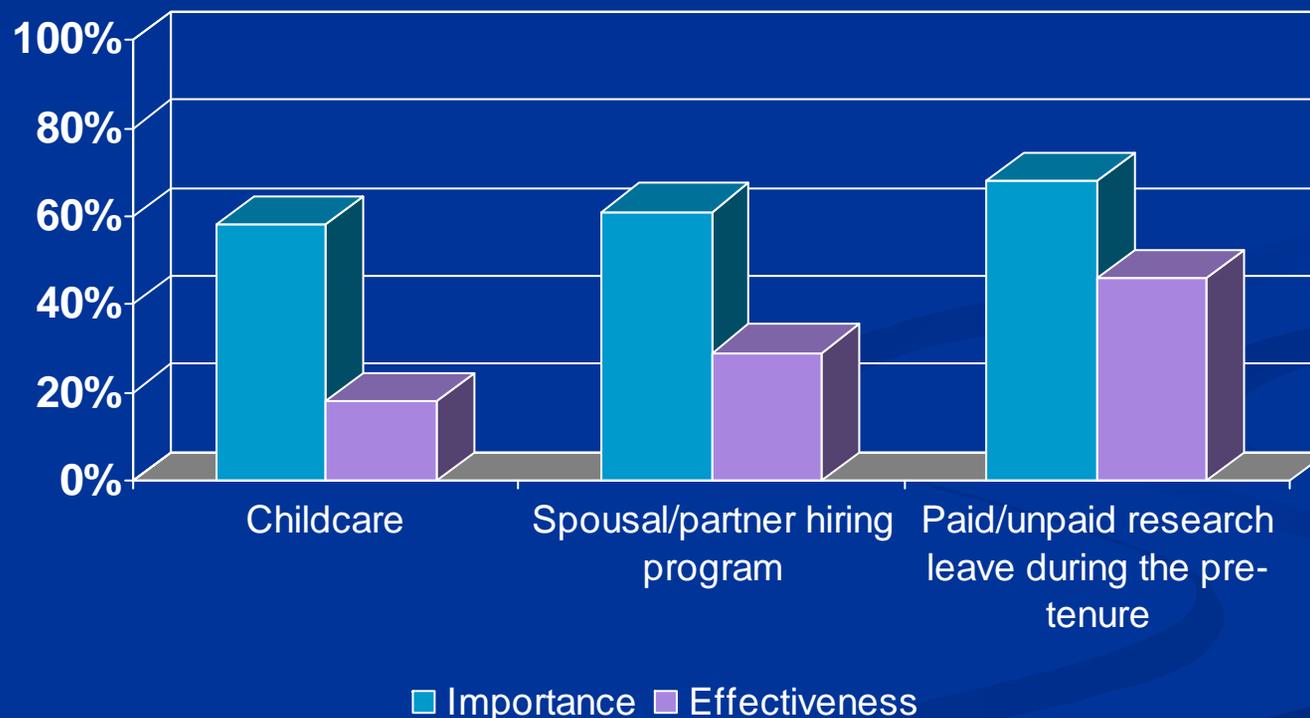
Policies and Practice Related to Tenure and Work-Life

- Several policies were viewed as *important and effective* among junior faculty.



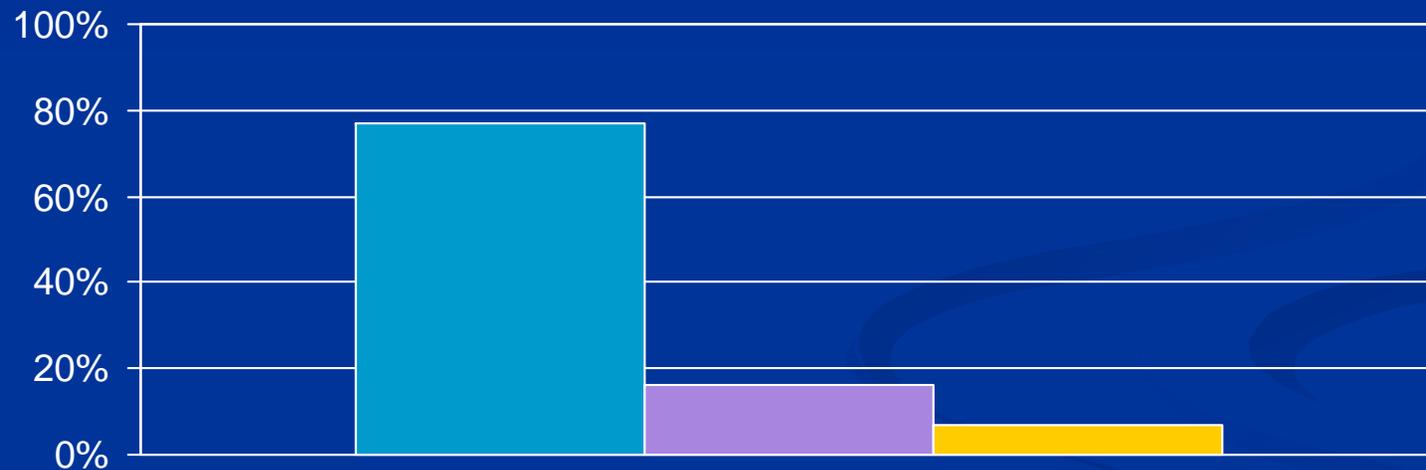
Policies and Practice Related to Tenure and Work-Life

- Junior faculty also identified several policies as important but *not effective*.



Collegiality Within Department

- Junior faculty perceive fair treatment within the department.



On the whole, my department treats junior faculty fairly compared to one another.

■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Neither Agree/Nor Disagree

Collegiality and Fit within Department

- Opportunities for collaboration and interaction with senior colleagues in their department were concerns for junior faculty.

Your level of satisfaction with:	% Satisfied	% Unsatisfied*	Peer Rank	National Rank
...opportunities to collaborate with senior faculty	53	31	5 th	39%
...the amount of personal interaction you have with senior colleagues in your department	55	21	5 th	22%
...the intellectual vitality of senior colleagues in your department	45	34	5 th	28%
...how well you fit in the department	63	22	5 th	19%

*Percentage does not equal 100% due to respondents who selected neither satisfied nor unsatisfied

Global Satisfaction

- Best aspects about working at Virginia Tech:

	Overall	Women	Men	White Faculty	Fac of Color
Geographic Location	★	★	★	★	★
Academic Freedom	★	★	★	★	★
My sense of 'fit' here	★		★	★	★
Support of Colleagues	★	★		★	
Quality of Colleagues			★		
Teaching Load		★			
Cost of Living					★

Global Satisfaction

■ Worst aspects about working at Virginia Tech:

Women	Unrelenting pressure to perform	Geographic Location	Men
	Spousal/partner hiring program (or lack thereof)	Quality of grad. students	
	Absence of others like me	Compensation	
	Lack of support for research/creative work	Quality of facilities	
White Faculty	Geographic Location	Geographic Location	Faculty of Color
	Unrelenting pressure to perform	Quality of grad. students	
	Compensation	Lack of support for research/creative work	
	Quality of facilities	Lack of diversity	

Global Satisfaction

- Majority of VT faculty are satisfied, but not as satisfied as those at other universities.

	% Satisfied	% Unsatisfied*	Peer Rank	National Rank
How satisfied are you with your department as a place to work	78	15	3 rd	46%
How satisfied are you with the institution as a place to work	59	23	6 th	22%
	Great/ Good	Bad/ Awful		
How do you rate your institution as a place for junior faculty to work	64	8	6 th	33%

*Percentage does not equal 100% due to respondents who selected neither satisfied nor unsatisfied; selected So-so for institution as a place for junior faculty to work

Next Steps

- Disaggregating to see what is going on
- Sharing with many audiences, including junior faculty
- Invitation to Cathy Trower to speak at January 8 *AdvanceVT* conference
- Working together to identify issues that can be addressed and improved
- Talking to other institutions about what they are doing...