

Perceptions of Pre-Tenure Faculty: Findings of the COACHE Survey

What is COACHE?

- The Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) Survey is conducted by the Harvard Graduate School of Education
- Intensive focus on **pre-tenure faculty**
- Measures institutional experiences and job satisfaction
- Provides national and peer **benchmarks**
 - Over 8000 respondents from 104 universities nationwide

COACHE Survey Overview

- 307 tenure-track faculty hired at Virginia Tech before Jan 2009 were surveyed in fall 2009
- 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; percentile relative to 104 universities

COACHE Survey Overview

- Survey questions focus on 10 major themes
(number of items per theme):
 - Tenure practices (10)
 - Tenure expectations: clarity (6)
 - Tenure expectations: reasonableness (6)
 - Nature of work: overall (6)
 - Nature of work: teaching (10)
 - Nature of work: research (6)
 - Climate, Culture, and Collegiality (17)
 - Work and home (13)
 - Compensation and benefits (3)
 - Global Satisfaction (4)

Selected Peer Institutions

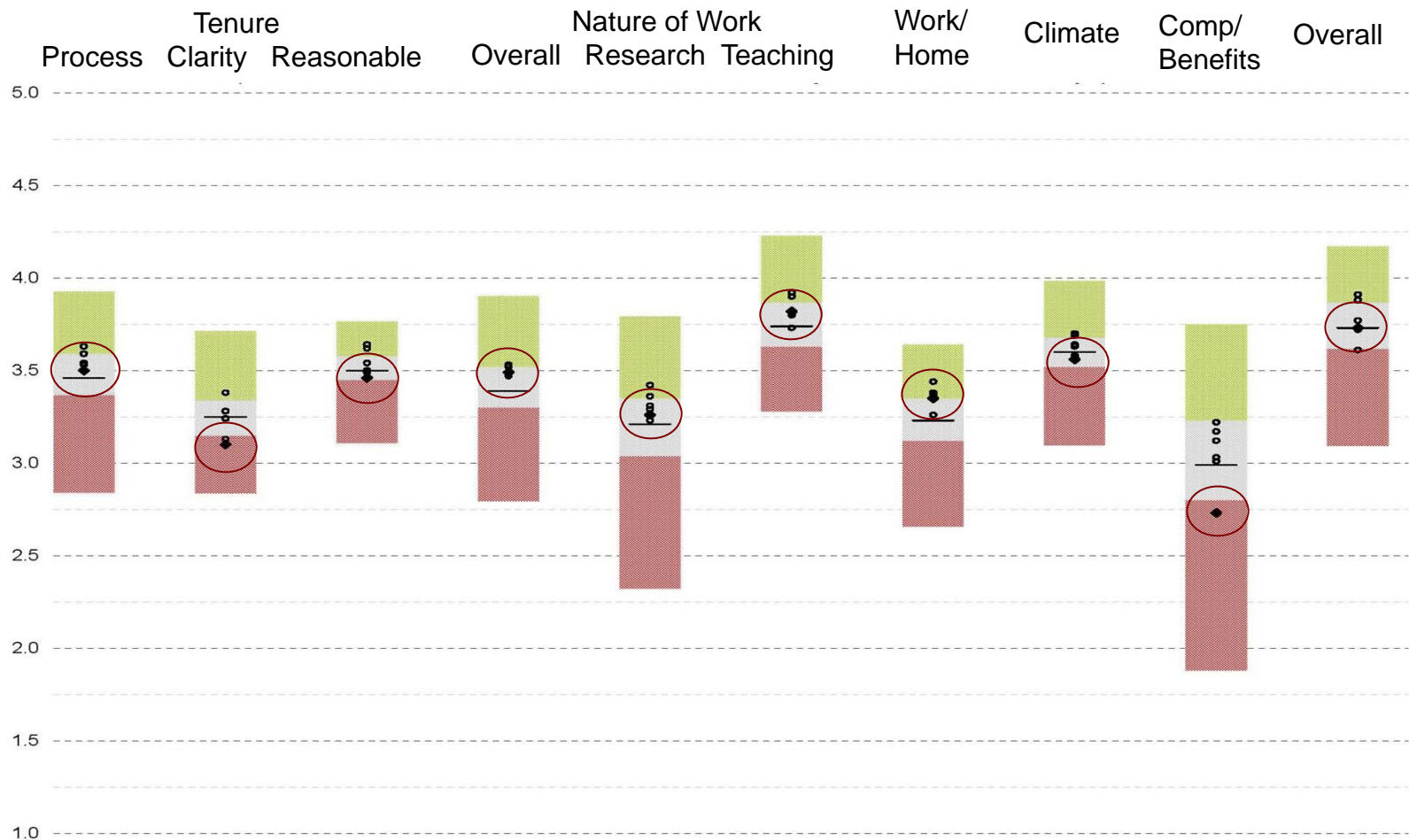
Virginia Tech chose five peer institutions to compare survey results:

- Iowa State University
- North Carolina State University
- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- University of Missouri at Columbia
- Washington State University

Population Demographics

	Virginia Tech			All Universities
	Total Population	Responses	Response Rate	Response Rate
Overall	307	211	69%	57%
Men	173	117	68%	54%
Women	134	94	70%	61%
White, non-Hispanic	206	148	72%	59%
Faculty of Color	101	63	62%	54%

COACHE Findings Overview



Areas of Strength at Virginia Tech

(1st or 2nd among peers, top quartile of universities)

- Nature of the work overall
 - Quality of facilities
 - Amount of access to TA's, RA's, etc.
- Work and home
 - Stop-the-clock
 - Paid/unpaid personal leave
 - Institution makes having children and tenure-track compatible
- Climate, culture, collegiality
 - Peer reviews of teaching or research



Areas of Concern at Virginia Tech

(5th or 6th among peers, bottom quartile of universities)

- Clarity of tenure expectations regarding:
 - Teaching
 - Departmental colleague
 - Campus citizen
 - Member of the community
- Work and home
 - Ability to balance between professional and personal time
- Climate, culture, collegiality
 - Formal mentoring
 - Amount of professional interaction with colleagues
 - How well you fit
 - Intellectual vitality of tenured colleagues



Virginia Tech Trends: 2006 vs. 2009

- Improving

- Institution makes having and raising children compatible with tenure-track
- Chief Academic Officer cares about quality of life for pre-tenure faculty



- Worsening

- Compensation



Differences by gender

- Female faculty at Virginia Tech rated the following survey dimensions at least 10 percent lower than male faculty:
 - Quality of facilities
 - Clerical/administrative services
 - Research services
 - Amount of professional interaction with tenured colleagues

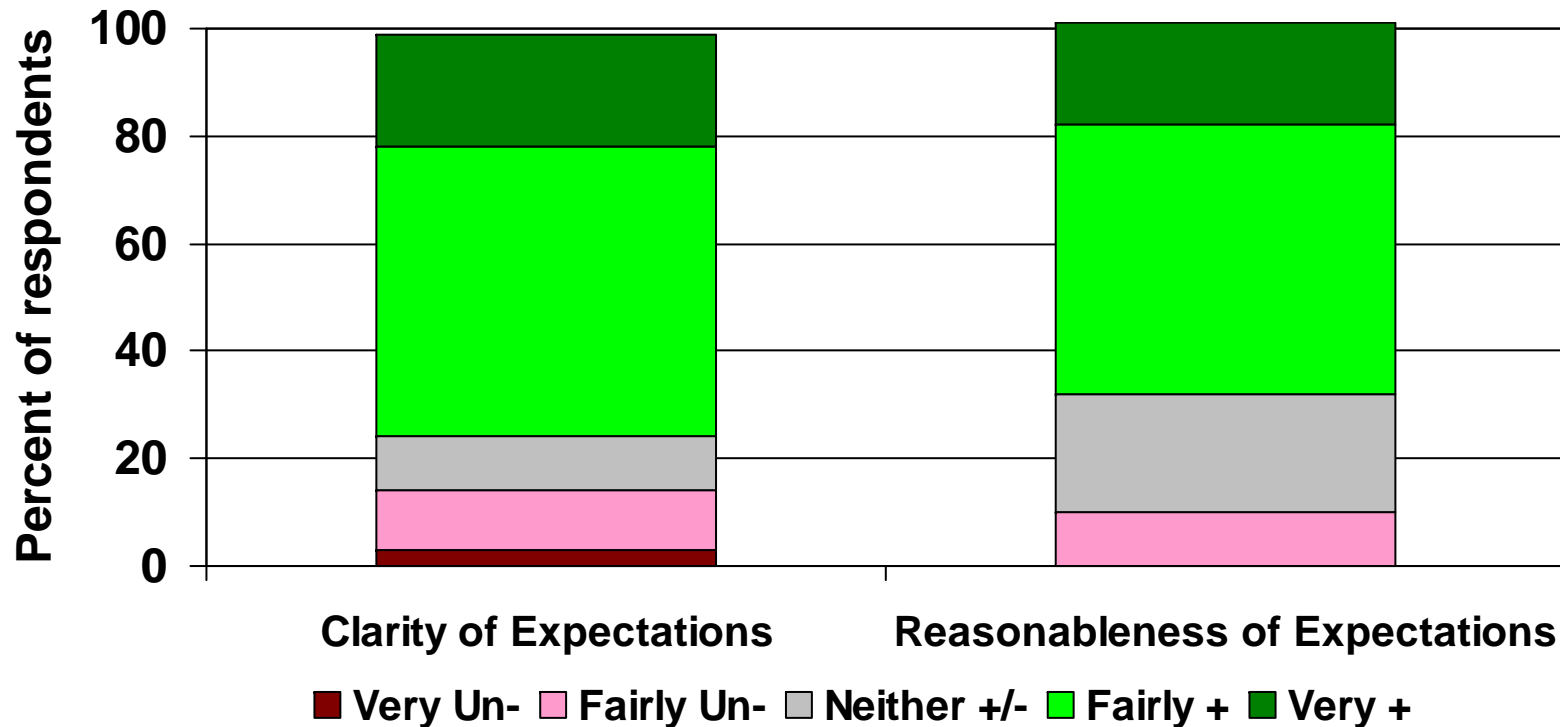
Differences by race/ethnicity

- Faculty of color at Virginia Tech rated the following survey dimensions at least 10 percent lower than white faculty:
 - Professional assistance for improving teaching
 - Modified duties for parental or other reasons
 - Informal mentoring
 - Opportunities to collaborate with tenured faculty
 - Value faculty in your department place on your work
 - Amount of personal interaction with tenured colleagues
 - Participation in governance of department
 - Would again choose to work at this institution

Tenure policies and practices

Perceived Clarity and Reasonableness of Expectations as a Scholar

Junior faculty find what's expected of them as a scholar to be relatively clear and reasonable.



Clarity of Tenure Expectations

Is what's expected of you in order to earn tenure CLEAR to you regarding your performance as a:

	% Clear*	% Unclear*	Peer Rank	National %tile
Teacher	62	18	5	13
Colleague in the department	31	34	6	5
Campus citizen	21	45	6	2
Member of the community	27	44	5	25

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

Transparency of the Tenure Process

Junior faculty believe tenure decisions are made based on performance but report mixed messages from colleagues.

	% Agree*	% Disagree*	Peer Rank	National %tile
I have received consistent messages from senior colleagues about the requirements for tenure.	55	35	6 th	43%
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).	71	14	4 th	62%

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

Transparency of the Tenure Process

VT is low among its peer group, but at about the mean for all participating universities.

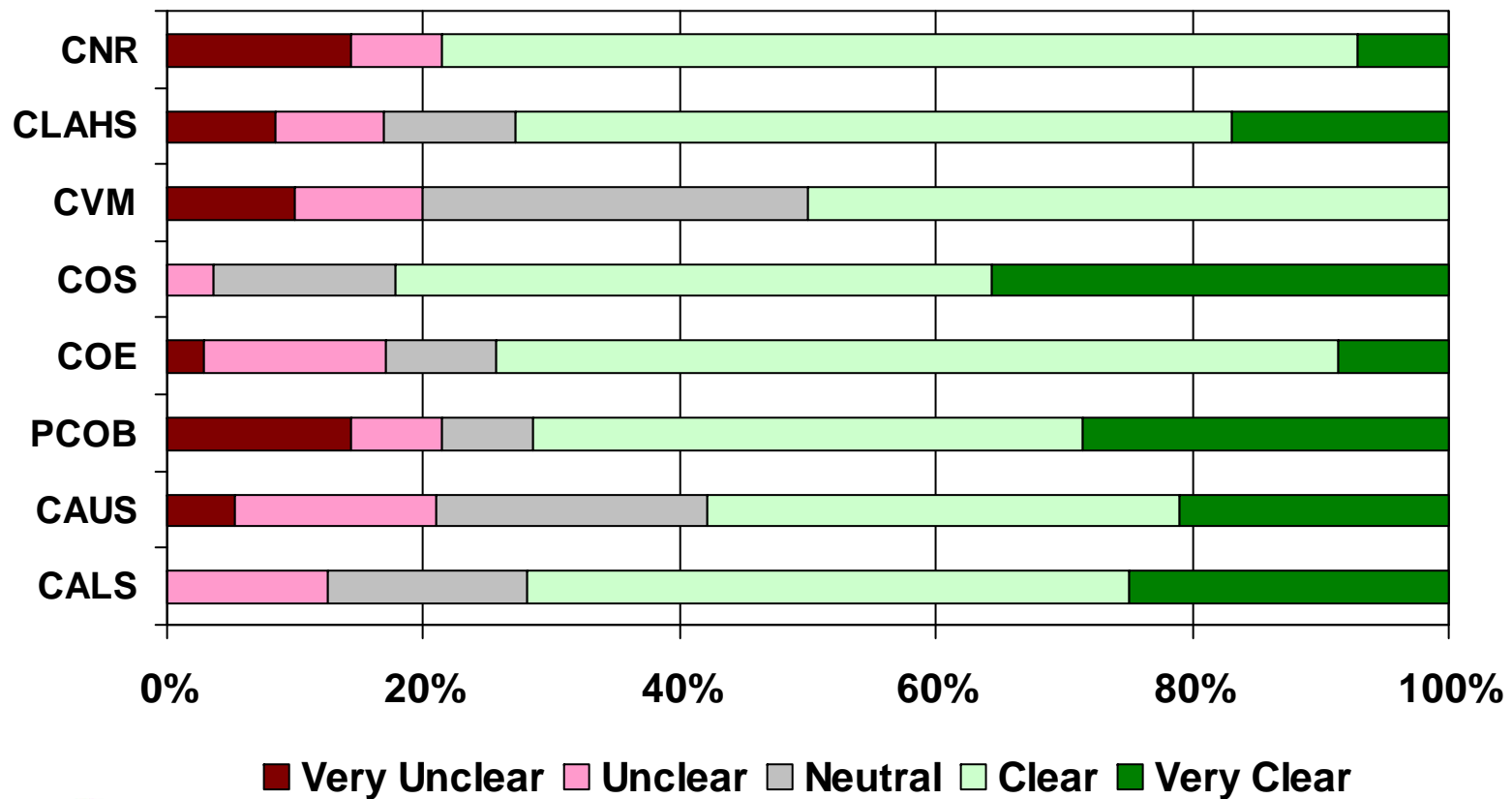
	% Clear*	% Unclear*	Peer Rank	National %tile
I find the tenure process in my department to be	72	16	6 th	50%
I find the tenure criteria (what things are evaluated) in my department to be	72	15	5 th	61%
I find the tenure standards (the performance threshold) to be	58	24	5 th	58%
I find the body of evidence that will be considered in making my tenure decision	58	17	6 th	42%
My sense of whether or not I will achieve tenure is	58	13	4 th	48%

Disciplinary Differences on Tenure Questions

- Faculty in the biological sciences, social sciences, engineering/math/comp sci, physical sciences, and business had higher mean scores on clarity of what is expected for tenure.
- Faculty in architecture/bldg construction, education, visual and performing arts, and humanities had relatively low scores on tenure questions.

College Differences in Tenure Clarity

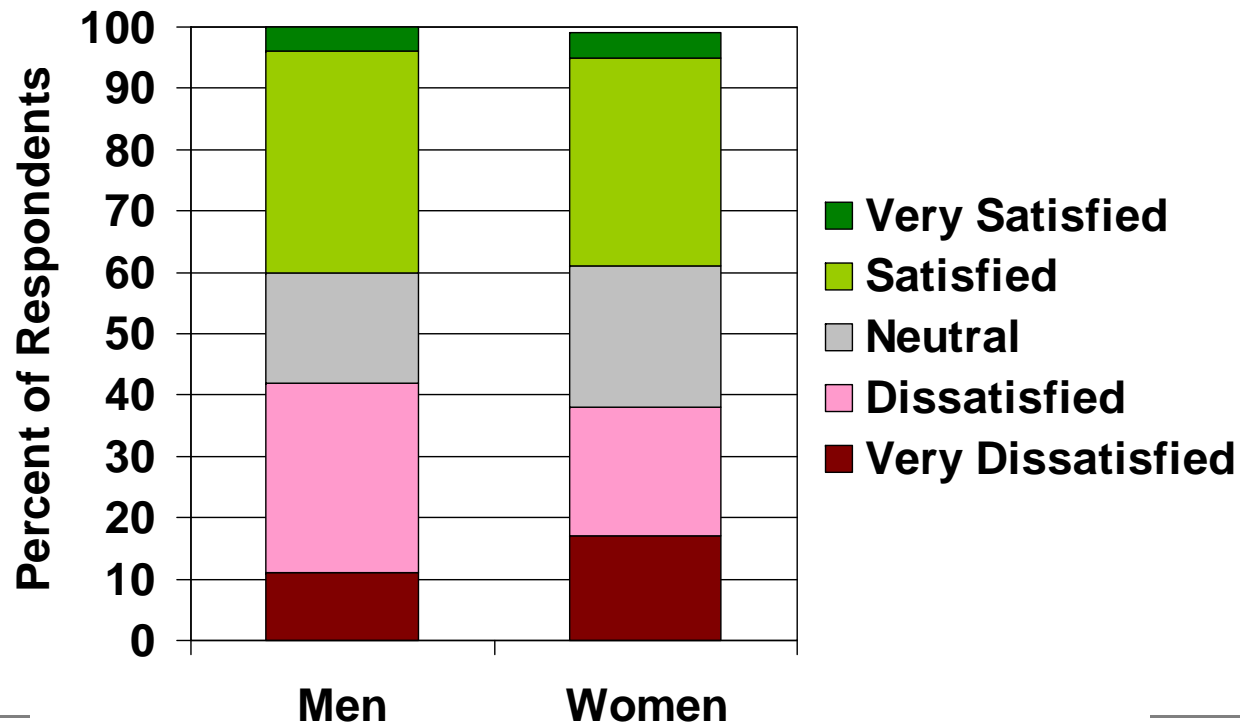
I find the tenure process in my department to be



Work/Life Policies

Satisfaction with Work-Life Balance

- Both men and women struggle to balance personal and professional life



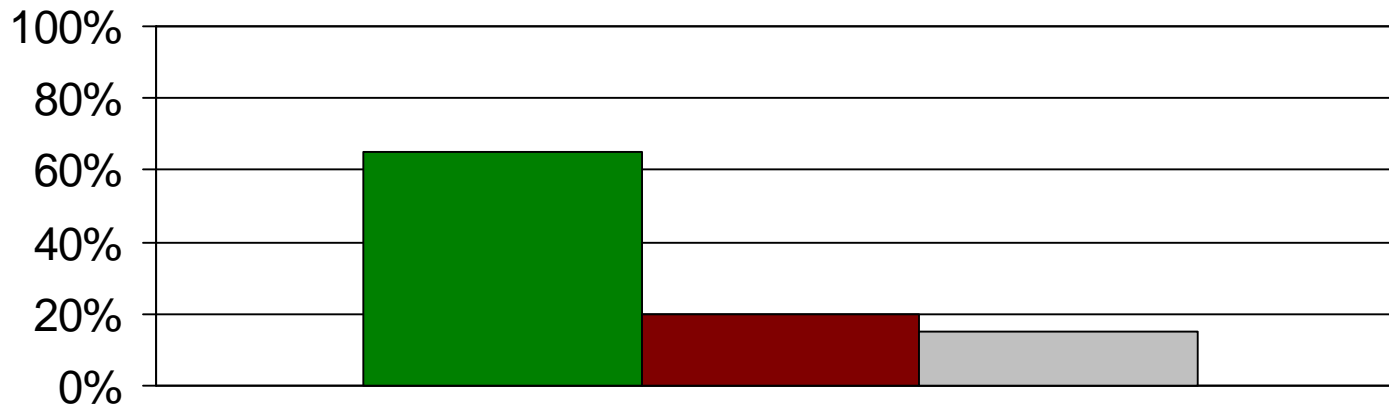
Perceptions of Work-Life Balance

	% Agree*	% Disagree*	Peer Rank	National %tile
My departmental colleagues do what they can to make <i>having</i> children and the tenure track compatible.	60	17	6 th	42%
My departmental colleagues do what they can to make <i>raising</i> children and the tenure track compatible.	61	16	5 th	49%
My colleagues are respectful of my efforts to balance work and home responsibilities.	67	15	NA	45%

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

Satisfaction with Work-Life Policies

VT is ranked very favorably (95th percentile; 2nd among peers) on *institutional* support for balancing children and tenure track.

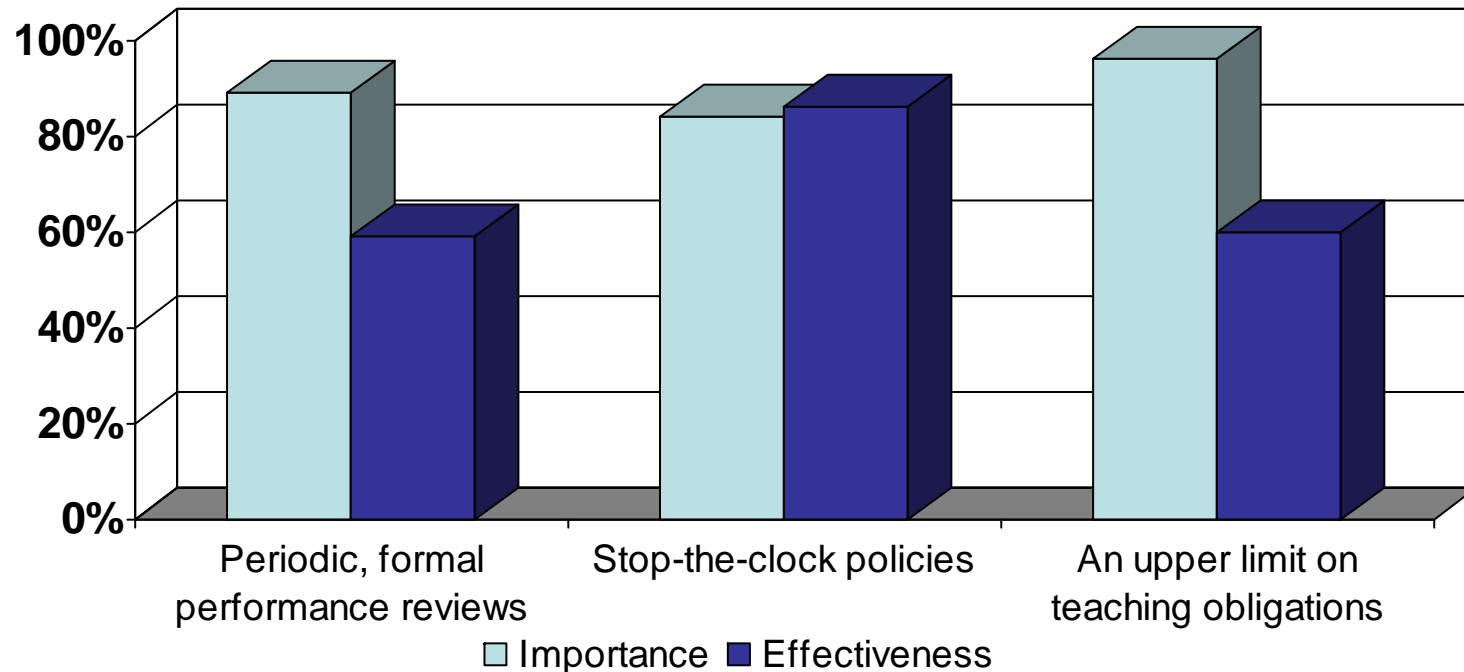


My institution does what it can to make having children and the tenure track compatible.

■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Neither Agree/Nor Disagree

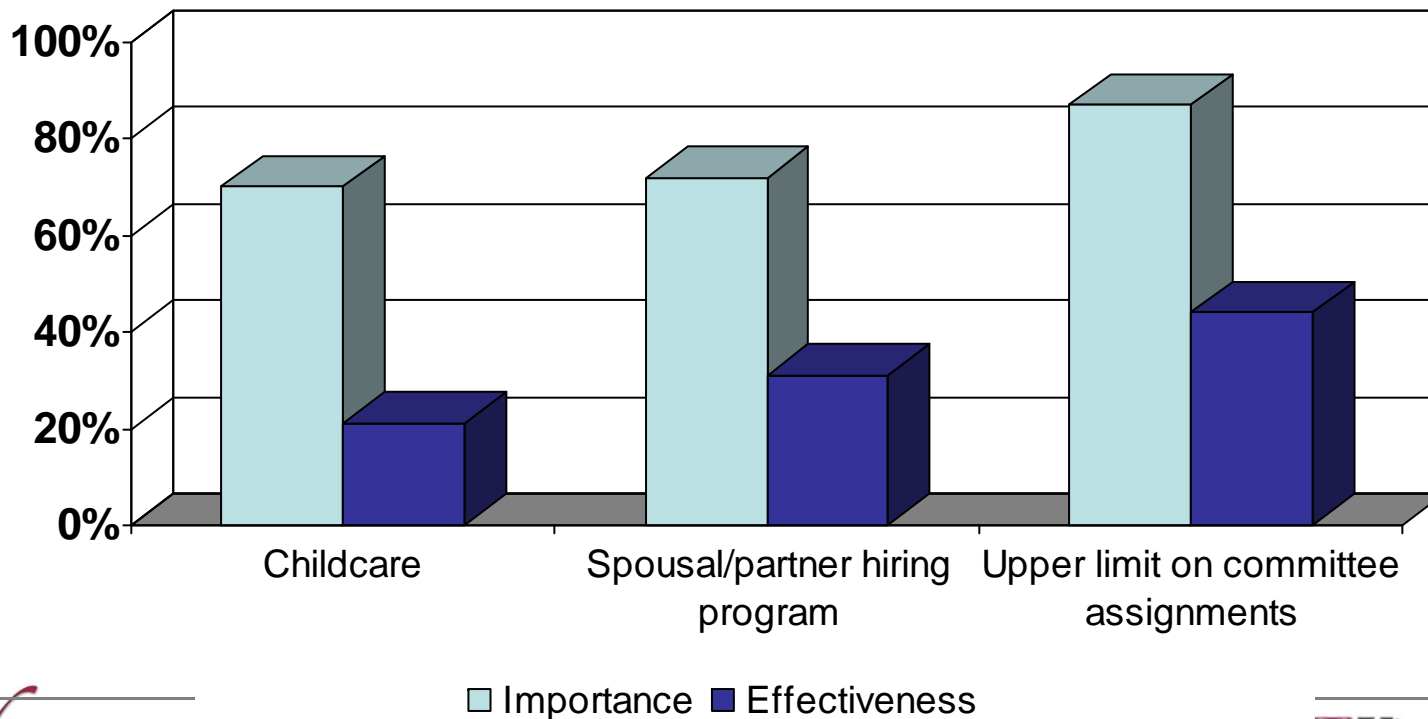
Policies and Practices Related to Tenure and Work-Life

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



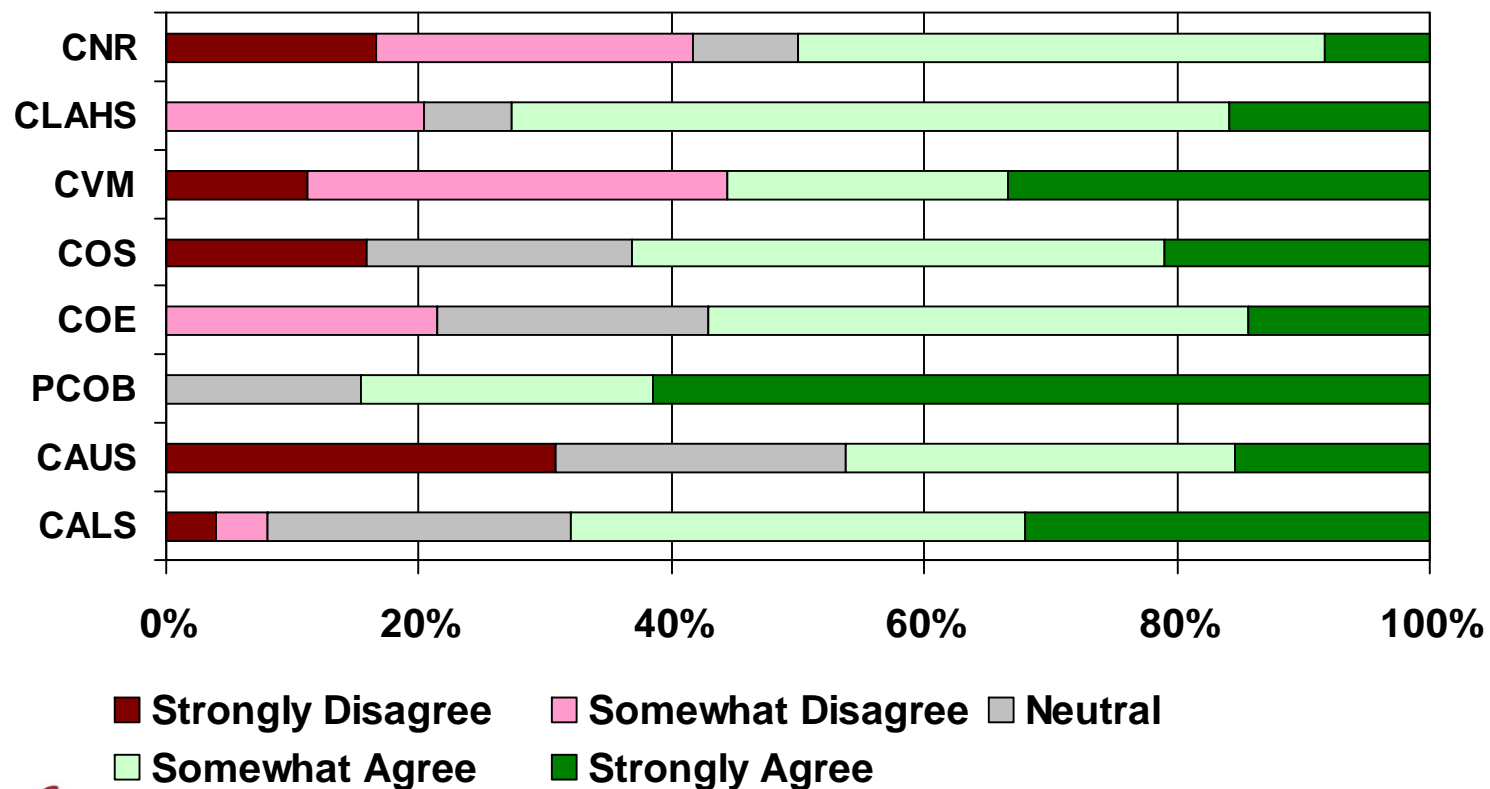
Policies and Practice Related to Tenure and Work-Life

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



College differences in perceptions

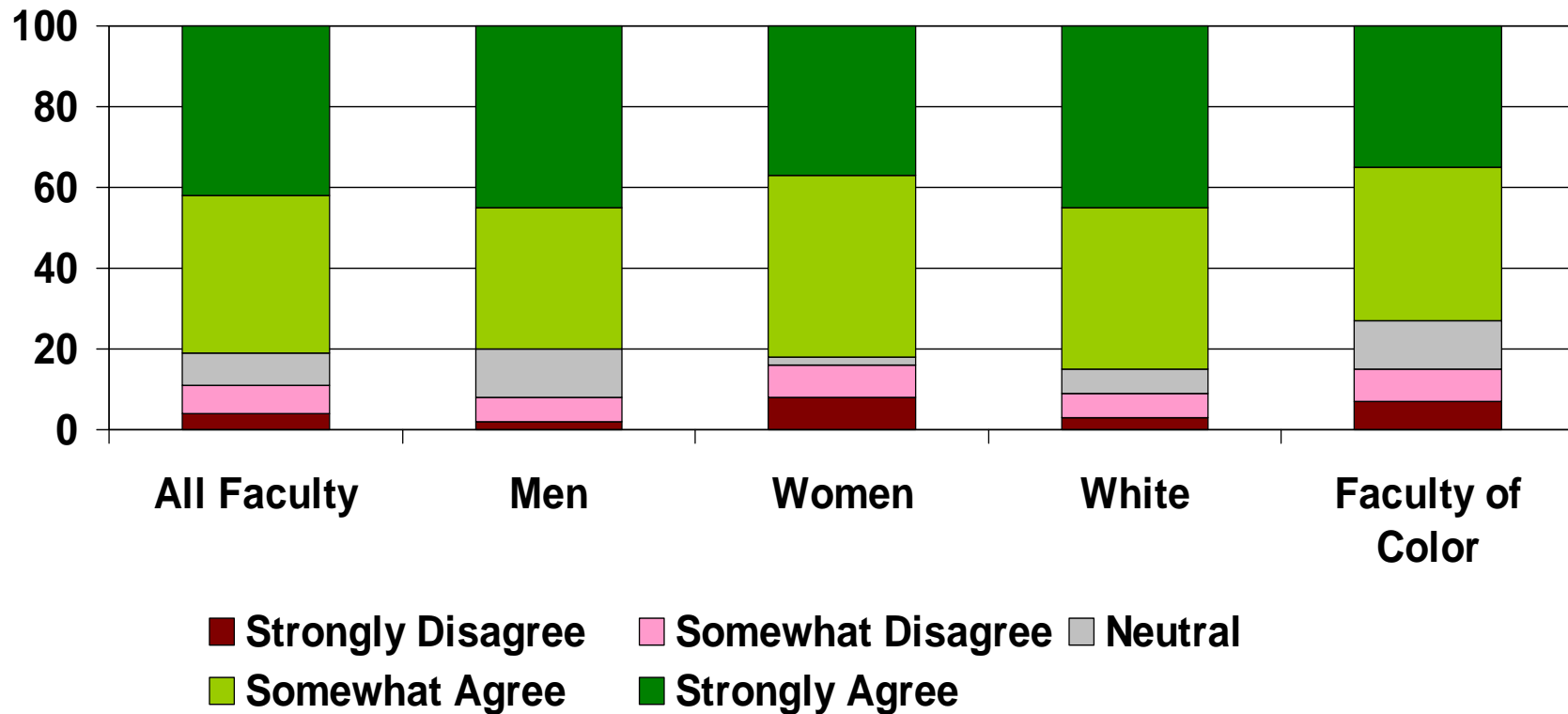
My institution does what it can to make having children and the tenure-track compatible.



Climate, Culture, Collegiality

Climate, Culture, and Collegiality

On the whole, my institution is collegial.



Collegiality and Fit within Department

Relationships with senior colleagues in their department were concerns for junior faculty.

Your level of satisfaction with:	% Satisfied	% Unsatisfied*	Peer Rank	National %tile
...amount of <i>professional</i> interaction with senior colleagues in your department	50	23	6 th	34%
...the amount of <i>personal</i> interaction with senior colleagues in your department	58	16	3 th	27%
...the intellectual vitality of senior colleagues in your department	48	31	6 th	24%
...how well you fit in your department/at your institution	63	18	5 th	15%

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

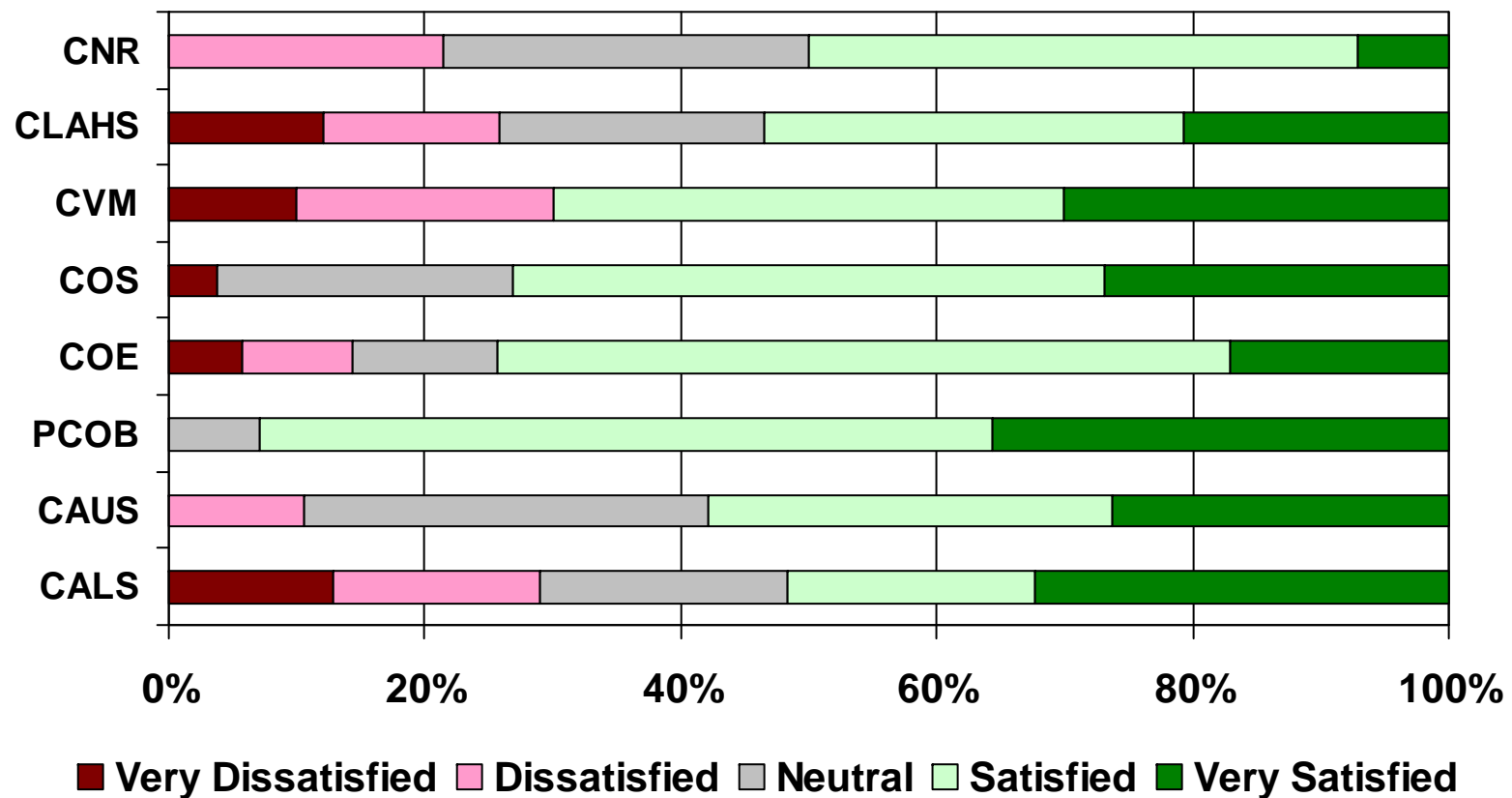
Collegiality and Fit within Department

White faculty were more satisfied than faculty of color with some aspects of department climate.

% satisfied or very satisfied with:	White Faculty	Faculty of Color
...opportunities to collaborate with tenured faculty	61%	38%
...value faculty in your department place on your work	62%	50%
...amount of personal interaction with tenured colleagues	62%	47%
...participation in governance of your department	69%	52%

Collegiality and Fit within Department

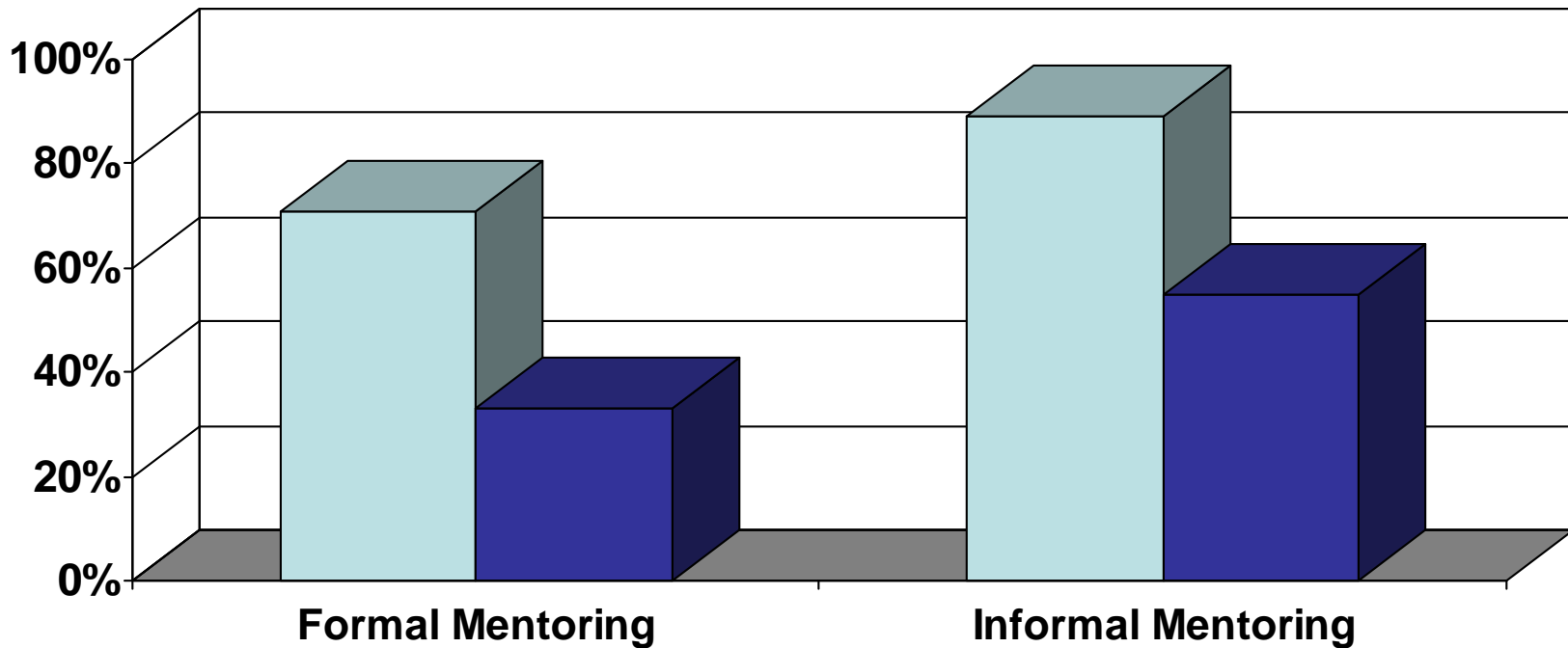
Faculty satisfaction with how well they fit varies somewhat by college.



Mentoring

Mentoring

Pre-tenure faculty see mentoring as important, but not particularly effective.



□ Importance ■ Effectiveness

Some mentoring experiences are positive:

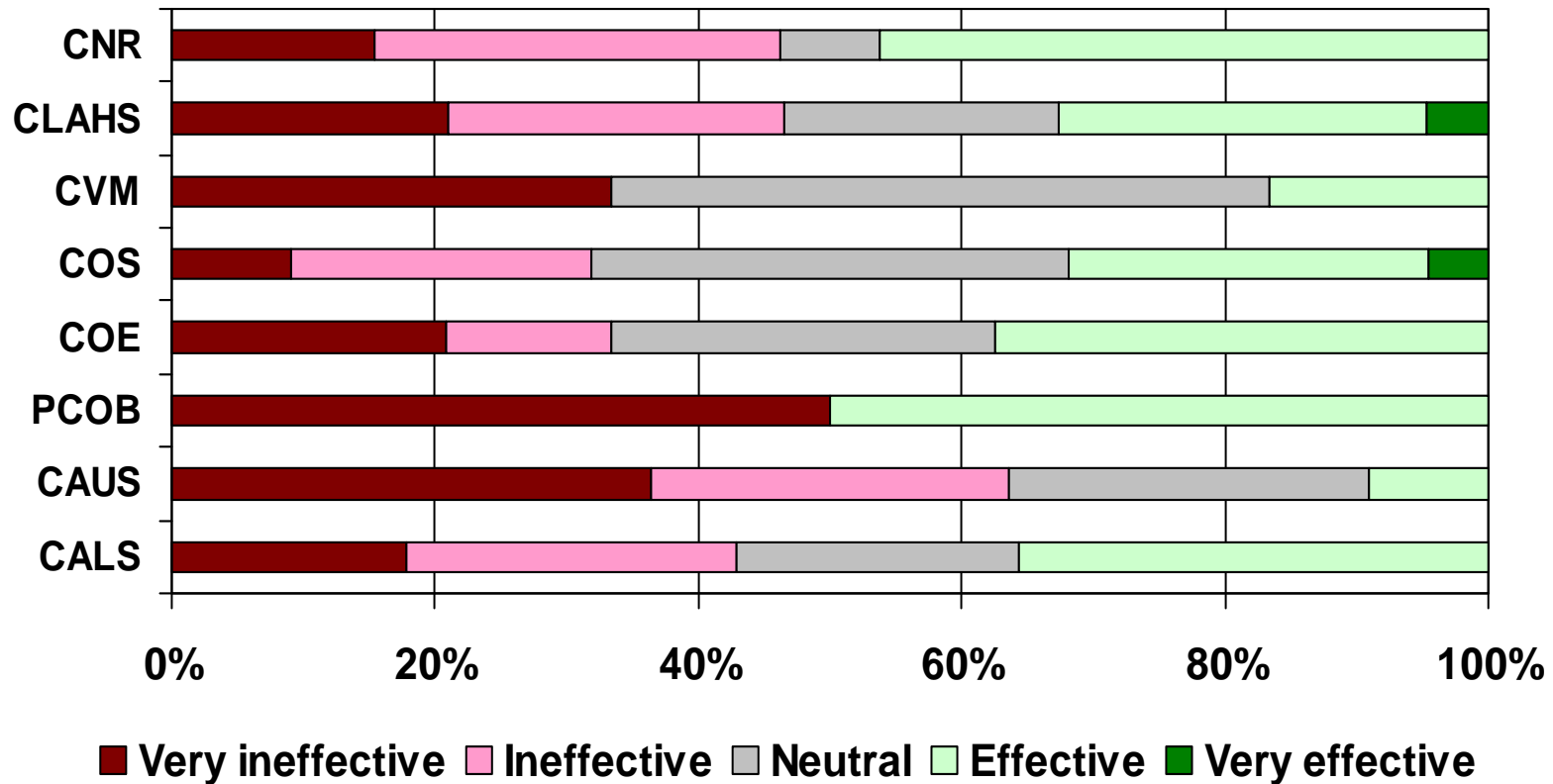
- “I have been helped by many tenured faculty members and have their assistance to be vital to my happiness and success!!”
- “Informal mentoring has been great, but I think I have just been lucky.”
- “My mentor has been fantastic! She has been an attentive, engaged, committed mentor who has done everything she can to help me be a better scholar and teacher.”

Others not so much:

- “My assigned mentors don’t agree with or like one another, putting me in a ‘no-win’ situation. For one of these assigned mentors, the mentor’s idea of mentoring is dumping undesirable work onto me...”
- “The mentoring advice I got sometimes make things worse.”

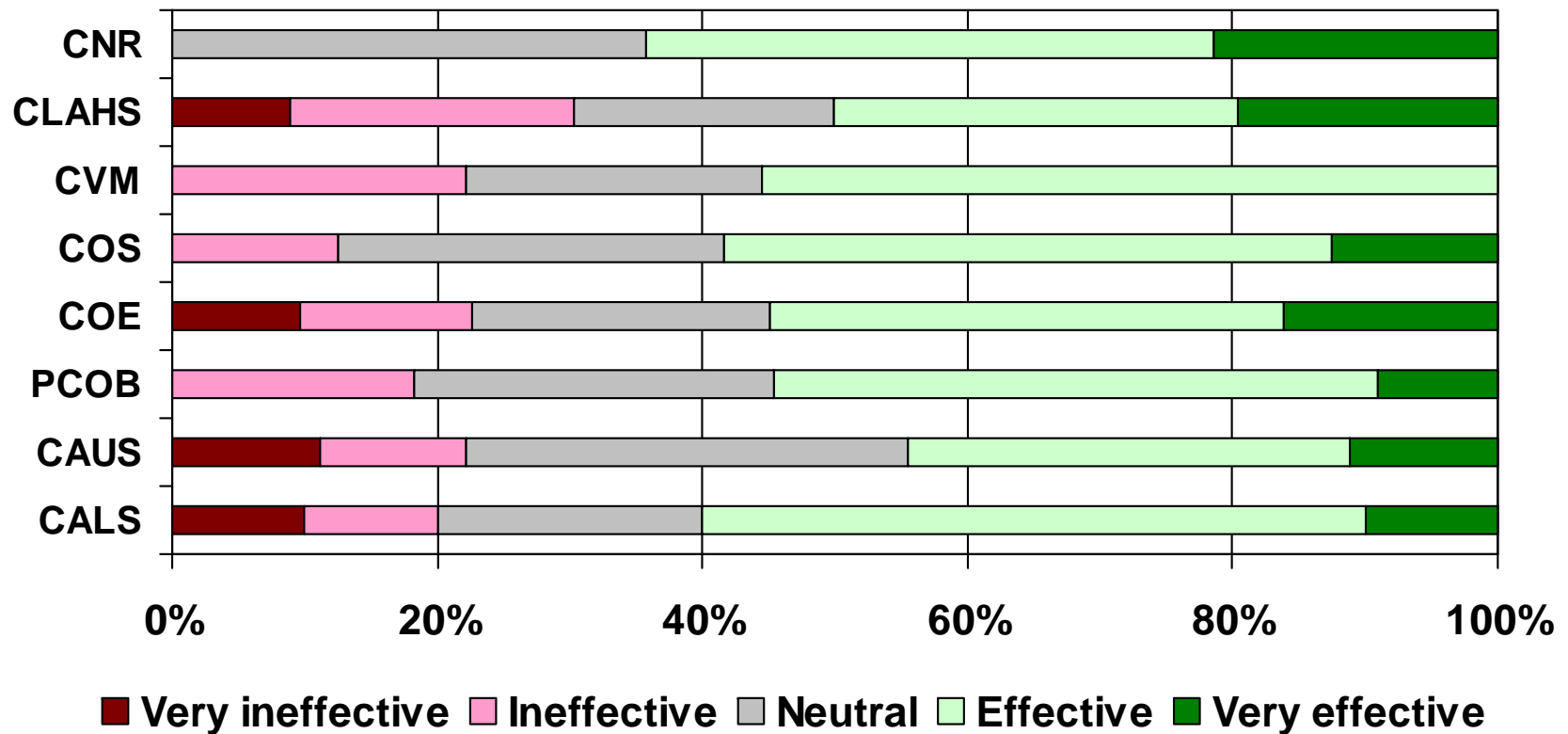
Mentoring varies by College

Effectiveness of Formal Mentoring Program



Mentoring varies by College

Effectiveness of Informal Mentoring



Overall Satisfaction

Global Satisfaction

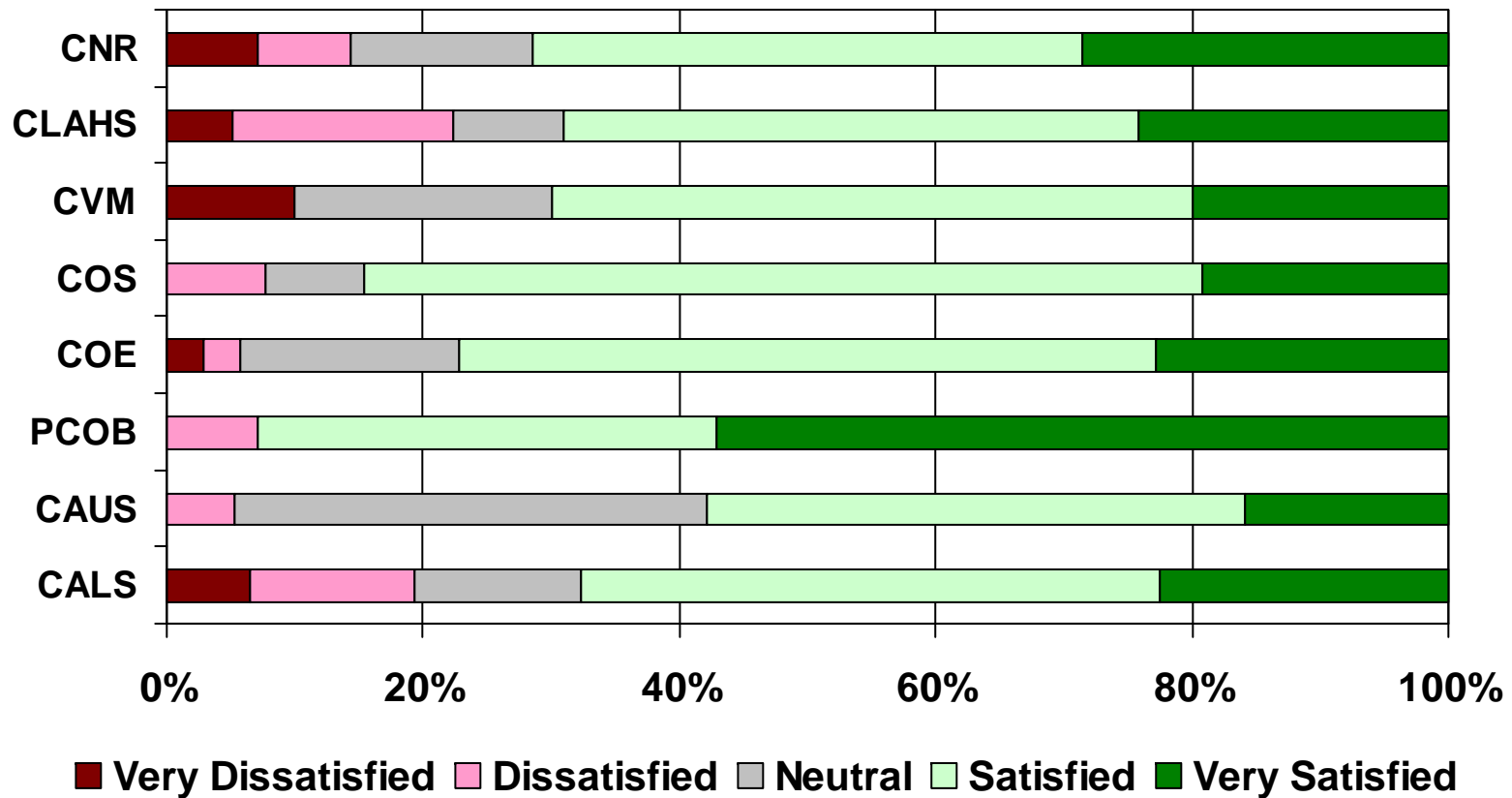
Majority of Virginia Tech faculty are satisfied, but not as satisfied as those at other universities.

	% Satisfied	% Unsatisfied*	Peer Rank	National %tile
How satisfied are you with your <i>department</i> as a place to work	73	14	5th	29%
How satisfied are you with the <i>institution</i> as a place to work	64	16	5th	43%
	Great/Good	Bad/Awful		
How do you rate your institution as a place for junior faculty to work	73	6	4th	65%

*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

Global Satisfaction by College

All things considered, how satisfied are you with your department as a place to work?



Best and Worst

Best aspects about working at Virginia Tech:

	Overall	Women	Men	White Faculty	Faculty of Color
Academic Freedom	★	★	★		★
Support of Colleagues	★	★	★	★	★
Geographic Location	★	★	★	★	
My sense of 'fit' here	★	★	★	★	
Research/creative work req'ts for tenure		★	★	★	
Cost of Living			★		★
Commute					★

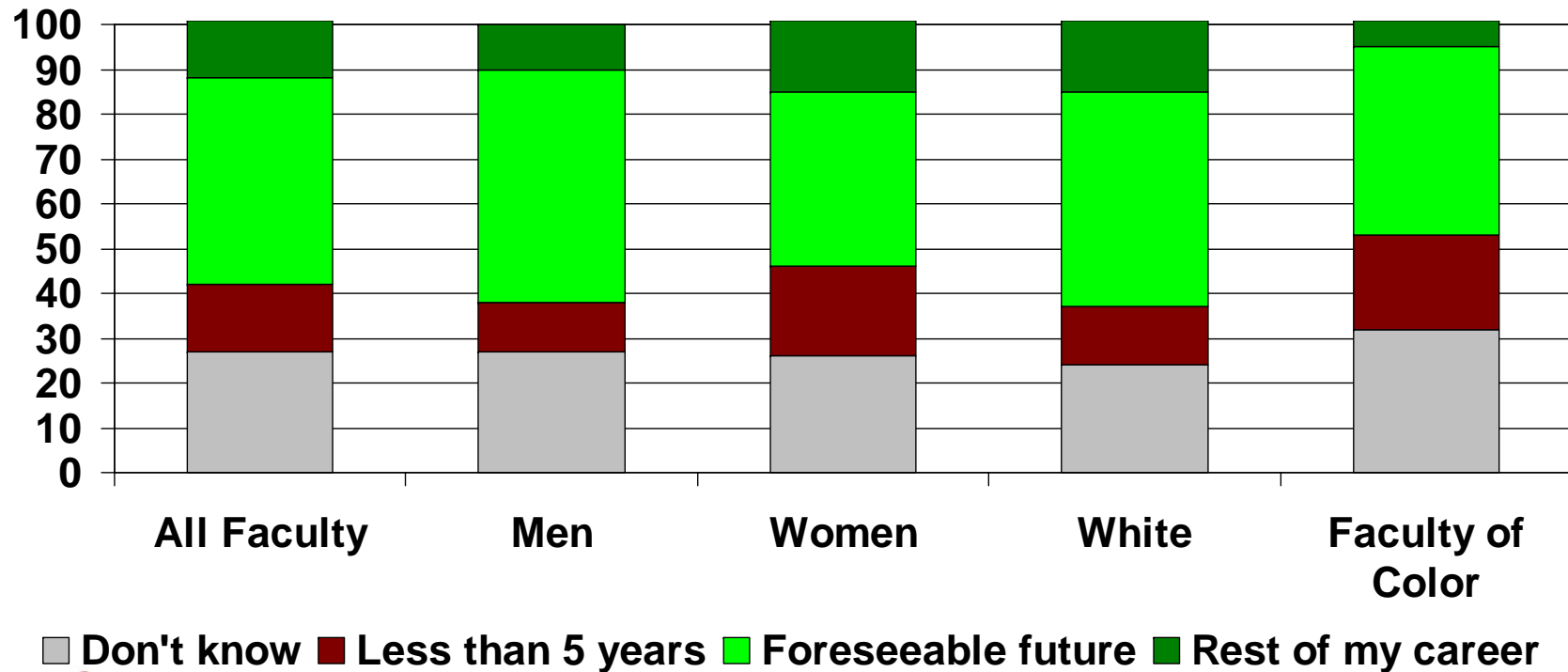
Best and Worst

Worst aspects about working at Virginia Tech:

Women	Geographic location	Men	Compensation
	Spousal/partner hiring program		Geographic location
	Absence of others like me		Quality of grad. students
	Lack of diversity		Spousal/partner hiring program
White Faculty	Compensation	Faculty of Color	Absence of others like me
	Geographic location		Geographic location
	Spousal/partner hiring program		Quality of grad. students
	Quality of facilities		Lack of diversity
	Absence of others like me	Compensation	
	Lack of assistance for proposals		
	Too much service		
	Unrelenting pressure to perform		

Future Plans

Assuming you achieve tenure, how long do you plan to remain at your institution?



For more information:

- http://www.advance.vt.edu/Measuring_Progress/COACHE/COACHE.html
- <http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=coache&tabgroupid=icb.tabgroup104863>