

Climate Issues for Women
Arizona State University



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Overview

- National initiatives to address experiences of women faculty, staff and students in universities
- Several initiatives occurring within ASU
- Consultant hired to meet with women faculty, staff, students in small (8-10) groups
- Strategic Planning retreat-focus on short term and long term action steps

Context

- ABOR Report on Commission on Status for Women: 1991 (10 years old, accomplished 80% of recommended actions by 1998)
- Hiring a new ASU President
- Task forces/initiatives within ASU (Work/Life Survey, Child Care Task Force)
- Time for a new strategic plan

Process

Day 1– East Campus: Faculty, staff, administrative staff, identified issues

Day 2 and 3: Women employees (faculty, service personnel, administrative directors, chairs/deans, academic professionals), and students (undergraduate and graduate)

Approximately 200 women participated

Question: What have you experienced as a woman or have seen others experience?

Process

- Promise of confidentiality and request for confidentiality
- Invitation to send further information to consultant
- Solicited individual experiences, representative of women in various roles/categories at ASU

East Campus



- Isolation
- Need for professional development
- Climate of disrespect (e.g., not being taken seriously, opinions discounted)
- Need for mentoring
- Differential impact of resource reductions
- Pockets of chilly climate, positive climate, need for leadership accountability
- Women's differences in way approach work

Main: Service Professionals

- Lack of professional development opportunities
- Isolated
- Lack of recognition and support from supervisor
- Lack of clarity about classification
- Fear of retaliation

Main: Administrative Leadership

- Glass ceiling and cultural prohibition about promoting from within
- Women have higher degrees but men have higher positions
- Not mentored
- Female dominated because salaries are low
- Women challenged more, lied about
- Salary inequity

Administrative Leadership (Cont)

- Inequitable distribution of professional development opportunities across VP areas
- Covert attitudes about women's and men's decisions to have families- culture does not support
- Some women strongly supported by male supervisors, others felt passed over

Main: Students

- Sexual Assault Education Coordinator
- Women's Studies- only B.A.
- Sexual Harassment
- Safety: Escort service hours and perimeter
Lighting, Parking, Days, funding
- Child care- sick child care, elder care, more options
- Recruiting diverse faculty

Students (cont)

- Cultural/societal issues that affect women: eating disorders, plastic surgery, health issues
- Communication to commuting students
- Welcoming community space for women students
- Create a climate of respect
- Partner benefits

Students (cont)

- Acknowledge crimes of violence
- Women's athletics underfunded
- Need for Work/Life Center
- Baby-changing stations in men's and women's restrooms
- Rape prevention and counseling
- Extended hours for nontraditional support

Main: Students-Engineering

- Chilly climate with other male students
- Intimidated by male faculty, don't ask questions
- Attention is negative
- Some faculty make negative statements about women in class
- Won't attend office hours-yelled at
- Lonely

Main: Students- Graduate

- Men and women students differentially treated in classrooms, men allowed to dominate discussions
- Male students favored, encouraged in research projects/teams/careers
- Fear of being 'bossy', offending male students
- Sexual harassment

Students- Graduate (cont)

- Pregnant students treated differently
- Women students have to “mask” themselves
- Any attention is negative
- Expectations aren't clear
- Male students and faculty have trouble listening and taking women's concerns seriously, including about T.A. issues
- Student health for adults, not teenagers
- Child care

Main: Faculty Assistant Professor

- Informal networking excludes women
- Feeling invisible
- Lack of mentoring: role models don't exist or leave
- Women asked to do extra service, don't feel can say no
- Housing for single women
- Students can be hostile

Main: Faculty of color

- Extra service required- desired
- Face time is critical
- Perceptions of others about AA
- Interdisciplinary studies: valued, but use traditional criteria
- Resentment from white women

Faculty of color (Cont)

- Culture of department affected by chair/head
- Revolving door of senior women
- Resistance to raising issues
- Who advocates for hostile climate?
- Teaching help doesn't address issues of race

Main: Lesbian/Bisexual/ Transgendered

- Homophobic areas- afraid to out due to harassment
- Isolation
- No safe place on campus to be out
- Lack of courses with consistent LGBT content
- Exclusionary language
- Domestic partner benefits

Main: Faculty Non-tenure track

- Less inclusive of men
- Male students are aggressive with women
- Isolated from ASU; FWA too hierarchical
- Insecure (Year to year contract)
- Poor accommodations for maternity leave
- Hierarchical structure and lack of respect
- Public recognition of work

Main: Faculty Associate Professor

- Guidelines/expectations for Full are unclear
- Moving target
- Lack of support/lack of mentoring
- Salary compression
- Need to develop assertiveness skills
- Disproportionate amount of service expected
- Different treatment by students
- Male dominated management culture

Main: Faculty Professor

- Attitude about climate come from top administrators
- Resources are limiting
- Service role is very heavy
- Psychological cost of “fighting to get there”
- Goal? Regents professor- what is the pool?
- External criteria, equal; internal, differential

Main: Academic Professionals



- Category misunderstood
- Isolated
- Lack of mentoring
- Problems with maternity leave
- Salary inequity/compression/low pay
- Left out of informal networks

Main: Classified Staff

- Supervisors continue to think traditionally about work (40 hours, 8-5, M-F)
- Inconsistency across ASU about policies
- Opportunities for advancement
- Lack of recognition/reward for extra work
- Lack of accountability
- Salary inequity/lack of compensation

Classified Staff (Cont)

- Child care- infant care, availability
- Perceptions of seriousness if nontraditional work options
- Work life boundary different from faculty
- Lack of respect
- Sexual harassment
- Subtle retaliation if complain

Main: Academic Administrators

- Salary and salary inequity across campus
- Climate of respect
- Isolated from other women administrators
- Need for domestic partner benefits, and supportive culture on work/life
- Women “play by rules” that men did not do
- Women under more scrutiny
- Informal decision-making undermining women’s leadership

Voices Heard

- “I thought- great, I’ll be one girl in 70 guys, I’ll get lots of attention. Now I know that I only stick out when I do something wrong” student
- “All the power is given to the men” employee
- “He told me if I was going to get married, I wasn’t serious about my career” student

Voices Heard

- “I can only succeed if I’m not noticed”
student
- “I’m invisible” faculty
- “There is no culture that includes women”
faculty
- “My chair told me I would only get tenure
because I’m a woman of color” faculty

Voices heard

- “I do the work, he gets the credit” staff
- “We are the bottom of the food chain” staff
- “Men get what they expect and give” faculty
- “The other male supervisors are given 90% of the meeting, I get 10% and he overyells me” supervisor

General Issues

- Climate of disrespect
- Feeling undervalued, unappreciated, unrecognized
- Isolation
- Perception that men take credit for work not done
- “For the good of the order” extra work-pitch in and do “hidden” work

General Issues

- Pockets of affirming or chilly/hostile climates
- Need for accountability
- Inconsistency in policy implementation
- Lack of information across campus
- Consistent reports of planning or intending to leave

Next Steps



- Strategic Planning Retreat
 - Clarify salient issues
 - Identify areas for strategic action
 - Brainstorm action steps
 - Identify items for “quick wins”
 - Prioritize long-term action plan
- Retreat follow-up
 - Draft plan and seek implementation