

Faculty Suggestions for Change

Each of the focus groups, discussion groups, and interviews concluded by asking faculty to recommend specific ideas for change. As will be evident below, suggestions evolved directly from the issues previously identified as supports or impediments to faculty work life and productivity and many complement the initiatives in the Action Agenda for a New Millennium that follows.

Salary Study and Tracking

The most highly emphasized recommendation by faculty was to implement a salary study with a consistent tracking process. While base salaries are currently public information and available in the library, more complete data are difficult to access and to compare. Faculty felt that it was incumbent upon the institution to address this problem immediately by specifically assigning the task to an office that could be held accountable by the president. Furthermore, the tracking of such data should be made readily available through an integrated and accessible information system.

“We need a study that says publicly, loudly, emphatically that there continues to be salary discrepancies, and inequities in working conditions. There are different starting salaries by sex and gender and central administration needs to take these kinds of things seriously and make sure real changes are instituted. Then, wouldn't it be wonderful to have some kind of safeguard instituted wherein, in another two years, we check to see where we were originally?”

“Equity pay should be clear cut and established throughout the whole campus. Not just here or over there” (female associate professor).

“I'm going through holy hell to find out what everyone makes. The individual negotiation and lack of tracking is obscene for a public institution. God knows, the adjuncts have it even worse.”

The processes for determining and tracking merit pay were highlighted by faculty as problematic and deserving attention as a part of creating equitable compensation across the campus.

“We do the merit review from the annual evaluation review. Research is 40%, teaching 40%, and service 20%. It’s a better system because there are those who do not even care to submit an annual performance report so he should be out of the equation for merit pay.”

“You can’t get a merit increase unless you’re coming to faculty meetings. And mentoring and advising students. While there are a number procedures in the by-laws about the performance evaluation not everyone follows them. Often the evaluation process is very subjective. We’re beginning to see positive substantive change but more needs to happen.”

Teaching, Advising, and Service Loads

Similar to salary and compensation issues, faculty felt that teaching and advising loads are inequitably distributed. Women faculty and faculty of color particularly seem to suffer under additional responsibilities for advising students and other service related requirements. Given that the annual performance reviews include such information, faculty suggested that the comprehensive collection and comparison of data would allow for immediate and on-going assessment. Simply put, such a system would allow faculty to check their perceptions against actual workloads. Another advantage this process allows is to shift teaching and advising loads so that someone more interested in teaching as compared to research would have objective criteria against which to measure their performance.

“The university should do some sort of evaluation of service because they could look at teaching loads and TAs and advisees and see that it is not equal between men and women” (female full professor).

“I’ve never really seen a university-wide discussion of service whether it be by gender or by size of department or by rank and what people are doing for the university. One of the things that I’ve felt is that women do an enormous amount of service.”

“While we need to maintain sufficient creativity and flexibility in the system, relying on individual interpretation and negotiation produces opportunity for inequity and misdirection of efforts.”

Clarification of Roles and Responsibilities

Clarifying roles and responsibilities is particularly important for those in appointed personnel positions with respect to teaching, advising, research, and service.

“Research professionals at other institutions are considered faculty even though they may be contractually appointed. Many of the appointed professionals are capable and more than willing to teach, however, they’re unable to do so because of the nature of their appointment. Recommendations include clearer definitions of appointed personnel, the possibility for sabbaticals, and the opportunity for creativity by supervisors to create leave time or a similar sabbatical structure for service professionals.”

“There is no formal grievance procedure for appointed personnel so roles and expectations are at the whim of their supervisors.”

Research Support

Faculty suggested that junior research sabbaticals and other resources be directed in ways that support faculty scholarship and productivity. Many faculty lack basic supports such as updated computers and software, supplies, and travel funds. Others complained about declining library resources and the high costs for operating grants.

“Research leaves of a full year should be made available to all tenure-track junior faculty, so that they may pursue the research projects necessary for tenure. Second, support in the form of graduate research assistants should be made more widely available” (female associate professor).

“Give junior level faculty the opportunity to participate in grants when there’s a spot for them especially early on. Carve out a piece for them in that process and help them learn the ropes”(male assistant professor).

“I came from [college/university] where I spent a year as an assistant professor. They had more support for writing grants than we had here. You could find somebody to do you budgets. You could get secretarial help without the secretary being pulled at the last minute because some administrator needed something done.”

Library

Faculty in the humanities and social sciences were especially concerned about maintaining and increasing the collections of the library in order to facilitate their work.

“There have been some cutbacks in important journals. The switch to use high technology has come at a cost for the library. They’ve had to make some choices and it’s very expensive to move to high technology and they’ve had to cut back on expensive journals and those are important for lots of us in the smaller fields. In my field it’s hopeless, I have to do interlibrary loan” (female associate professor).

Travel Contracts

Those faculty able to secure funds for traveling to conferences in order to give professional papers and performances objected to the institutional processes for authorizing travel and payment.

“The other frustration along the same lines is the inability of the university to provide purchasing power to get me a better deal especially when it comes to travel. It blows me away that we don’t have any contract for travel for the university. It’s a free for all.”

“That goes directly in the face of the other procurement system in terms of we bid everything out and yet the travel, it’s like, okay find the best deal you can and go for it” (male assistant professor).

Redefining Scholarship

Just as the Carnegie Foundation has encouraged institutions to reconsider their definitions of scholarship, so too the faculty at the University of Arizona suggested that more latitude and value be placed upon scholarly activities that include the scholarship of teaching and the scholarship of community outreach. As noted earlier, faculty were concerned about the lack of value placed on certain kinds of scholarship especially interdisciplinary, feminist, and diversity related topics.

“I would like to see the university rethink the tenure process so that the job descriptions that qualify for tenure are different, more diverse, so that there is flexibility in job descriptions and diversity. I think that the tenure process as it stands is somewhat of a class system.”

“We need a new definition of scholarship that focuses on being a model community member both within and without the institution. Create community by being a community member” (female associate professor).

“I think that it would have made a lot of sense for the university to have said, okay you’re at the life career stage now where we know you can do this research. We could we give you an extra teaching responsibility and take out your research for a couple of years and you could bargain with us to get it back in a few years, or service, or whatever because we value the whole person that you are. There has never been an offer of a trade, it’s just that you’re deficient”(female associate professor).

“There needs to be some way of adjusting the tenure clock for people who do extraordinary amounts of student advising.”

“I think it should be that good teachers are recognized equally with good scholars. Everybody has their different combination of abilities and we should respect those. Some people are really good at service. To demand too much from a single person is really counterproductive”(female full professor).

“I would love to have policies in place that undergird the value of integrative work. True collaborations among departments and colleges, among faculty and students, among the university and the broader community/state. I would love to see a policy in place that allowed us to each be considered faculty of the university rather than bound by a department.”

Specific Institutional Supports

Faculty identified a number of specific institutional programs, policies, and procedures that if implemented or adhered to would significantly improve the quality of faculty work life.

Mentorship and Role Models

Faculty suggested a cross-institutional mentor program for new faculty as well as opportunities for professional development among higher-ranking faculty. Faculty also placed great importance on providing students with appropriate support and mentorship.

“Mentorship is instrumental rather than merely interpersonal. It’s at a very practical level, if you get a senior researcher with recognition and you’re now the second

name then your name starts being put around. If you don't have any grants you won't get any grants" (male assistant professor).

"Each person who is in a policy making position should become a mentor to someone and spend a significant part of their service time in being a mentor. As my mentor told me, it doesn't pay my salary so maybe some part of their salary or their service requirement could be specifically earmarked for mentoring one or two people who might not be part of the old buddy system" (female faculty of color).

"A mentor is supposed to tell you what the university policies are or at least help you interpret them. You can go to the websites and you can call all that stuff up yourself but sometimes you don't really see the differences. The best kind of advice to come from a mentor is to help with the process of balancing priorities. We all need mentorship even as we stay here" (male faculty).

"Not just mentoring but more workshops for untenured faculty where young assistant professors can come together and talk about interdisciplinary work and try to create the structure that would allow people to do that. Create an intellectual community where they would really feel alive and competent."

Leadership Training and Professional Development

Faculty were very supportive of training and professional development opportunities, especially for those faculty who are or who plan to become department chairs. The New Head Ed program was viewed as a step in the right direction, but since this program is not mandatory, there was concern that the program was simply "preaching to the choir." Faculty suggested that department chairs be required to attend professional development training and that other faculty interested in taking on leadership roles in the future be encouraged and supported to develop their skills.

"A male department chair would not let women with children change their teaching days to accommodate their childcare needs. Until he had a child. And then suddenly he understood. I don't think you train prejudice out of people but you can train ignorance out of people. If the department chairs were better trained, some of this would go away" (female full professors).

“It wasn’t enforced or mandated for everybody but there’s so much that could be done. I don’t want to say sensitivity training, but get more information to department heads about how involve the voices of their faculty in better ways. The Heads Up project is a good social occasion but it really doesn’t deal with the nitty gritty issues.”

“Heads Up had some good intentions but hasn’t really been realized because of the small number of attendees and the agenda items. You don’t have enough time to deal with the real difficult ones like how you improve supervision of staff. How do you deal with the tough issues of post-tenure review? How do you deal with difficult people and resolve it and negotiate? How do you deal with budgets? What do you do with disabilities?”

Increasing Women’s Roles in Leadership

Faculty suggested that women’s opportunities for taking on leadership roles within the institution should be supported and given priority. To female faculty, this entails providing training and professional development for women, as well as recognizing that women’s leadership styles may be different from those of their male colleagues.

“Women need to be encouraged to step into leadership roles and provided support once they are there.”

“She wanted consensus. She wanted people to agree before she moved forward on an issue. She wasn’t hierarchical. They shredded her. There is no appreciation and accommodation for a female leadership style. The male system is usually a reward and punishment system. There can be a different perspective on instituting institutional change.”

“The male administration uses the female style of consensus to diffuse what they don’t want to have happen. They use it in a negative way to keep change from happening. When they want their decisions their own way that they use the male hierarchical model.”

Alternative Duty Policies and Programs

Faculty were highly supportive of alternative duty policies, the sick childcare program, and they specifically recommended the establishment of an on-site child care facility. Faculty raised concerns that many individuals do not make use of the alternative duty policy due to fears that negative consequences will result. Others, while wanting to take advantage of these

institutional policies and programs, have been discouraged or prevented from doing so by leaders and administrators.

“It’s done for men occasionally but I think there needs to be much more clarity and, of course, it is representative of the way society treats childbearing and child raising. It’s something you’re supposed to do on your own but that’s changing in business. I read the Wall Street Journal everyday and there’s always information about companies that have become more family-friendly and men who are taking ¾ time jobs so they can spend time with their families. It’s certainly happening in the outside world so it would help a lot of my junior female colleagues and some of my male ones if there was a consistent policy about slowing the tenure clock” (female full professor).

“If I didn’t have a supportive chair I would have been out of luck and what about all of those other women who don’t have supportive chairs. And you choose between the man and the woman, so my husband was out of luck. You can’t both have these alternative duties. Only one designated parent is allowed and if it’s the father he has to somehow really prove that he’s changing the diapers” (female assistant professor).

“If your son is sick, you call up. I’m sorry the university no longer supports that program. Okay, I can cancel classes with 200 students.”

“We have no official childcare center on campus yet despite everybody’s best efforts and I think that in itself says a lot about what doesn’t work on campus” (female faculty).

Increasing Diversity including Recruitment and Retention Issues

Another recommendation by faculty was to improve the actual versus rhetorical priority on campus for increasing diversity. Faculty expressed the need to continue to hire women faculty and faculty of color as well as to recruit graduate students of color as a part of creating a pipeline for future faculty. But to UA faculty, increasing the diversity was far more than merely the recruitment of diverse individuals, it encompasses the integration of diverse perspectives and voices in courses and decision making processes. If the institution is sincere about becoming a multicultural campus, then faculty want to see diversity integrated throughout programs, policies, and procedures.

“What I would like to see is long range of plans for diversity building and for more integration with the local community” (male faculty).

“When they’re searching for the provost or whoever they’re searching for ask about their attitudes and understanding of diversity. Give them points, so to speak, for what they say about diversity perspectives not just value their background and administrative experience”(faculty of color).

“It needs to be said again. More hiring and more promotion of women and people of color and not just promotion and tenure but into administrative positions as well and the nurturing of that.”

“Support ethnic studies programs and women’s studies programs. Give enough resources to hire faculty because students crave this. We don’t have enough people teaching courses on these subjects.”

“Bring in more graduate students of color, give them fellowships, create our own pipeline. One thing feeds on the other. More faculty brings more students, more students demand more faculty.”

“There has to be some accountability. Department Heads aren’t held accountable as they should be. A Latina woman was competing with a white woman and the white woman looks just like everybody on the team. They both had the same skill sets but the Latina woman stood her ground so they were all afraid to hire her because they thought she’d be a troublemaker. Eventually, we all said we could live with either one. We all need to demand that our administrators be accountable for practicing equal opportunity and affirmative action” (male faculty of color).

“Why don’t you ask the excellent minority faculty why they left instead of trying to figure out how to recruit more? Do a retrospective survey, an exit interview. Maybe that would give you some ideas of how to retain the ones that come next. The letter of the law is that you have to do x,y,z. The spirit of the law is something entirely different and if there’s not a change in the spirit, there’s not going to be an atmosphere in which many people find it comfortable.”

Diversity Training

“Training regarding multicultural issues should be required for both faculty and students.”

“There needs to be diversity training and sensitivity workshops conducted for all administrators from the top down. I appreciate and value President Likins' initiatives but if this whole Project is supposed to make any kind of substantive impact then the diversity training needs to be started at the top.”

“Diversity is not about making that the work of people of color to do. One of the other things that I found very distressing about the focus on diversity training is I'm expected to do it. I'm the person that does sensitive subjects and diversity for the graduate TAs in my department. It needs to be made the responsibility of the general faculty. It doesn't matter what the numbers are if the climate is not really changing in the ways that decisions are made in the institution” (faculty of color).

Adherence to Policies and Procedures

Faculty were gravely upset over the lack of adherence to policies and procedures including the common operating system of individual negotiation. The results of such a process lead to inequalities and at times, outright discrimination. Moreover, faculty senses were heightened to differentials in resource distribution across departments. Faculty clamored for holding administrative leaders accountable for their actions and for making widely available budgetary information.

“Department heads are like feudal lords and if they want to give you the fatted calf you get it and if you don't get it they say they didn't have any money in the budget this year for that. How do we have any idea how much we're being lied to and how much we're being told the truth? There is no accountability and I would like to see 100% of the financial records on the table, available, posted on the bulletin board over the photocopier so that I know and anyone knows who is being supported in exactly which ways. Who gets 1500 bucks for a trip and who gets 500?”

“Every department gives different faculty phone privileges, computer privileges, and office space. Journal subscriptions. Books. A lot of faculty in my department got pagers. It's shocking that some people get tons and some people don't. Some people get all of their journals paid and some people are lucky if they have a paper clip on their desk.”

“We need to get rid of individual negotiation. During the whole recruitment process I wish I could have negotiated better to get a better contract. I don't feel bitter but I believed what I was told that this was the best they could do” (male faculty).

“What’s needed is someone who will enforce the policies that exist. There is just so much disregard of the current policies. Nobody has a way of checking on whether things are being enforced, so get these results to the president soon and make sure that there’s someone in there who is equitable and will enforce policies.”

Administrative Intervention to Replace Ineffective Leaders

Faculty tolerance was quite low for leaders that they perceived as ineffective, inefficiency, and inequitable in distributing resources and applying institutional policies. Beyond tolerance, however, many faculty felt that their careers as well as student learning were being damaged by inappropriate leadership and mismanagement. Faculty, therefore, recommended that the upper levels of administration take seriously the need to intervene and replace if necessary various deans, vice deans, and department chairs.

“I feel like we could all be killed off and drowned and nobody cares because it seems like they will allow the dean to do whatever he wants to do. There’s no recourse.”

“I can’t see how the college won’t be destroyed, people are leaving all the time. At some point you have to make a change in leadership to change the tone and to change the climate. People have even said walking into the college that a climate of distrust is palpable.”

“You need oversight from the university to know what is going on and to care. Somebody should make some kind of investigation or listen in an objective way. I don’t mean just coming in and believing everything you say necessarily but that you feel like that there’s a way to go beyond the current situation.”

“Faculty have worked very, very hard to try to reason, talk, advise, everything that could be done has possibly been done. We have met as a group, as a department, individuals have gone to talk. So we’re just frustrated because we’ve worked really hard to try to make a difference and try to educate but the administration won’t intervene. We were told to stop whining and complaining and get back to work. Believe me, if there had been complaints like this about a woman she would have been fired instantly.”

Improving Grievance and Recourse Procedures

Faculty experiences with grievance procedures were far less than positive. Instead, many faculty felt that they were discouraged from pursuing grievances, their concerns were not taken seriously, and/or they were made to blame for their own circumstances. Faculty recommended clearer processes and lines of communication.

“The system of recourse for women who are being treated unfairly in any way, whether it’s salary issues, a climate issue, a resources issue, or whatever issue, there needs to be a place to go and be heard, that’s confidential, that has the wherewithal to make recommendations that will matter. Part of the climate is that women and maybe others as well have been silenced. Women who have stories to tell, and maybe some men who have stories to tell feel silenced because there is no process through which those experiences are validated as being real. Even if there's nothing that can be done about it you can still have your experience validated as real, as important in a systematic way.”

“I had some very negative experiences. It’s almost hopeless because there is no recourse. The only recourse I have is to go to an attorney which I’ve done but how many people have to do that? Why should you have to do that?”

“I have strong feelings about the lack of a grievance policy at the University of Arizona. I supported the passage of the bill which would give whistle-blowers the same protection that other state employees are afforded” (female associate professor).

Improving Campus Climate

Faculty were asked to respond to the question, “what do you need to do your best work.” While some mentioned increased salaries and resources, most of the faculty identified less tangible elements of the environment such as basic respect, a sense that one’s contributions are valued and taken seriously, and equitable treatment from students, staff, and colleagues.

“It’s a matter of appreciation. Very seldom is there any appreciation for me as an individual or anything that I’ve done. It has happened once or twice in 20 years but that is small potatoes.”

“I think a number one motivator for me is feeling that I am respected. Getting positive feedback like someone acknowledges a grant that got accepted. But actually it’s more just the interactions you get from the people working with you. If your voice is heard. If you say something and it is acknowledged.”

“There needs to be some chain of support saying that people are valuable. Administrators must value you as people. There needs to be a structure to make sure that you’re a good leader and then you can work with faculty in the same way. That may be idealistic and maybe never happens but it means you have to choose people carefully for those positions and it means you have to then treat them in ways that value them.”

“Support the networking of groups like women of color. Give them resources to do collaborative work and give them information so that they can get in touch with each other.”

“There aren’t a lot of forums for me to meet you guys from other parts of the campus. We don’t really know the kinds of issues that you’re facing, the good things and the bad things so we assume you’re against us. I think the problem is not knowing.”

Power and Empowerment

“I think it’s important for an institution to pay attention to empowerment. People who function in the institution are very in tune with where the power seems to reside. As long as the power appears to reside in a male hierarchy the faculty will use their antenna to know that ‘Gee, this is the person who is really making decisions. Or, this is the person that really has the authority to make things happen.’ You’ll still have a force for stasis whereas if the institution paid more attention to how to create a center that will empower minority people, that will empower women, then we could get resources to flow in those directions.”

“I need my voice to be heard. I need to be given a share of the power. I need for them to show me that they value me in many ways. It could be salary. It could be feedback that they give me in the annual review process. If I had more true participation in some of the decision making” (female associate professor).

“I feel that the voices of women quite often get lost through all of this excessive filtering through the voices of men. I would like to see more things like this where women’s opinion is sought. Where women can have some input into what is going on and perhaps have some creative input into how to change things. Otherwise it’s sort of the old boys network just continuing.”

Interpersonal Communication

“People could treat each other more respectfully with more dignity. If only people could work better as teams, as colleagues, as positive reinforcers I think that would help tremendously. There’s a tendency among academics to have very high standards but often those criticisms are taken over to people as individuals and that can be extremely destructive. Ethically it’s really bad from the point of view of causing people not to be able to work as well as they should or produce as much as they should. So I would say encouraging a very positive atmosphere of collegiality is important.”

Implementing Change

Create Positive Rather than Negative Incentives

“We would like to have a welcoming environment where people can work creatively. Some of these goals could be tied to an incentive for administrators. For example, if you could demonstrate that you have improved diversity. If you could demonstrate that you had salary equity then that’s good for you. You get a raise so that change is a positive not a punitive thing. A positive reward system is set up so that it becomes an advantage to do this.”

“How do we make the importance of people of color a priority among competing priorities? How do we express or communicate the need in a larger national interest that students in the pipeline will effect our very own survival? You must make it part of the promotion and tenure process. Part of the renewal of contracts for administrators. We have to provide perks in terms of financial support for this kind of implementation to make it worth their while. Right now they’re not getting anything out of giving their time to help somebody else. Male or female, Black or White, Asian, Hispanic. They don’t get anything out of it.”

“If you don’t do a good job teaching, we’re going to shame you and fire you but if you do a really good job, isn’t that nice? So there’s perverse situation where the things that are valuable for the university’s ongoing salutation only have negative sanctions affiliated with them. I think it leads people to be embittered.”

One basis for the belief that positive change can occur at the institution is faculty recognition that despite its flaws, the overall climate of the institution has improved slightly within the last few years. Faculty saw this as a foundation upon which to build a more equitable and just learning community.

“The old boys may still be around, they are tenured after all, but we have moved forward a bit. When I first came here, I asked for a computer. (This was a number of

years ago.) The man who was dean at that time patted my shoulder and said, ‘Wouldn't you really rather have your own microwave in your office?’” (female faculty).

“When I first came here, there were differences and women were expected to get the coffee for male faculty” (male department head).

“It has really changed since then. I remember lots of patronizing talk and you got those general impressions from male faculty that you were incompetent. You had no choice but to just live with it. I don't think from what I'm seeing now that this is happening to the new women faculty within our department. Although, I know it has happened in the college and I think that we've run off a lot of people” (faculty of color).

“Progress has been made. There is hope that if an issue comes up and people take it seriously something will come of it. We have evidence of that. We have the childcare policy. We have family leave policies. We're going to have a spousal hire policy. We're going to have a partner accommodation policy and the Oasis Center. I'm very hopeful about the campus”(female faculty).

Will Change Occur?

A healthy admixture of skepticism and hope exists within the faculty as to whether the results of this Project will make an impact on the institution.

“It's always the women. It's AWF, it's their energy that's going into this Millennium Project. I am really frightened that this is like giving an aspirin to someone who has hardening of the arteries. It just is not enough. This is the first comprehensive study we've had in a long time. I think that's really good but it's also a pat answer. If you don't know what the problem is then you study it and certainly any academic knows how long that can take and how little people regard your results and actually report them and how little things change even when there's a compelling argument to change. So my feeling is that it might just be a Band-Aid but on the other hand you have to have hope. You have to have a mission. You have to have ideals and you have to be working in that direction” (female associate professor).

“There's a lot of latent feelings on the part of the faculty because they've been visited so many times before by these proclamations of something needing to be changed and the delivery has been lacking. We're facing, I think, a really critical point and are we gonna be able to deliver in some sense?” (male full professor).

“They presented the findings from a similar type forum. The comments ranged from everything to this was very provocative to it's just a bunch of women sitting around grumbling. I was shocked. It has to be taken seriously by the top all the way down and everyone in between. I think it needs to have a time frame around it, that in five years this is what we want to look like. In ten years this is what we want to look like and here are the steps that we're going to take. Make this well publicized and begin to do the small

things that cause that vision to become reality. There's a vision as to what the campus is going to look like in terms of the buildings and the student center in great detail, but the part that's alive here, the people, there's no such vision" (female faculty).

"Most people just want to feel like they are making a difference, that their voices are being heard. When one is an extremely small minnow in a huge pond there is little reason to become too excited about working on some committee trying to breach the dam. I'm not sure how you get the 'little guys' like me to buy into a decision-making process at the university level, but that seems to be the challenge."

In the final analysis, this quote simply states what one hopes will happen:

"Don't let this Millennium Project sit in a big folder and not be acted upon."

Action Agenda for a New Millennium

This report was designed to prompt change to enhance the campus climate for academic excellence. The findings have reinforced some of the positive aspects of faculty work life at the University of Arizona, but they have also articulated some of the impediments to faculty success. As a result, the Action Agenda for a New Millennium was created to address the problems uncovered by this study. The "action initiatives" that appear below provide concrete ways to address those hindrances in order to create a diverse community, a fair community, and a hospitable community—all keys to academic excellence.