

## Summary of Mid-Career Studies

### I. Findings

#### A. MLA report:

- Women are in associate professor rank longer than men at all institutions
- Women with children, married/partnered take longer in rank
- Women report less job satisfaction
- Women report spending more time grading and commenting on student work
- Women report spending more time in teaching
- Women report more time caring for children
- Women spend more time doing service
- Amount of time for service is increasing because of a rise in the number of non-tenure track faculty
- The time in rank at associate professor is lengthening
- Reasons to promote to full are not compelling so some people are deciding to stay associate professors
- Good scholarship is supported by:
  - Travel to national conferences
  - Research leaves - sabbaticals
  - Strong mentoring systems, both internal and external

#### B. Huston, Norman, Ambrose, 2007:

- Cultural isolation: international faculty don't feel cared about personally but, their work is encouraged by the department. Their commitment to the institution erodes over time.
- Institutional expectations between saying they want interdisciplinary research but no structural support. Puts faculty member in a bind and commitment erodes over time.
- If unresolved issues are left to fester over time, the senior faculty become disengaged and they poison the junior faculty. Creates poor departmental climates and a lack of senior faculty to mentor the junior faculty.

#### C. Baldwin, DeZure, Shaw, & Moretto, 2008:

- Absence of motivating professional goals can cause professors to settle into a dull routine or begin to invest their energies in activities outside of their professional lives
- More service is required of associate/full professors
- There is an expectation of increasing the workload (research, publication, service, grants, etc.) after tenure
- Associate professors are expected to assume new roles and duties of service, leadership, and administrative responsibilities.
- Energy levels vary after tenure. Some people decrease in energy.
- Many are left on their own with little to no support
- As an associate professor, they need to shift from short term projects (to get tenure) to longer range thinking and goals. They need to be able to pursue deeper and more complex research questions/problems.
- Some ask "What do I do now?" and "How do I know what my options are?"

- Constant challenge to remain competitive in rapidly evolving disciplines
- How do I stay engaged for more than 20 years?
- Hard to set priorities when promotion criteria is vague
- Chairs need to help keep faculty focused
- Women and minorities continue to have special challenges:
  - Higher service
  - More student requests
  - More committees
  - Less access to information
  - Less opportunity for input into departmental decisions
- Pressures of family life catch up with mid career
- Culturally: associate professors may be asked to lead committees who have members from their home countries who are considered elders – hard for them and puts them in a bind – creates more pressure

## **II. Recommendations from the reports**

### **A. MLA Report:**

- Establish clear guidelines for promotion to full professor. Adopt more expansive conceptions of research, scholarship, publications, teaching, and service.
- Offer substantial raises at promotion to full professor. Prestige with promotion, not just more university service.
- Create programs for mentoring associate professors
- Develop training programs for department chairs which include:
  - On-going development for associate professors. Emphasize long range planning for at least 5 years into the future.
  - Continual assessment and equalization of service and teaching.
  - Monitoring years in rank. 9 years is considered “boundary” year.
- Devote specific resources, leaves for research, travel funds, research support for associate professor scholarship.
- Establish leadership training for newly tenured women in the recognition that promotion typically entails appointment to leadership positions.
- Examine language around associate professors who are in rank for an extended number of years: stuck, dead wood, stalled, frozen, etc. and change the negativity.

### **B. Huston, Norman, Ambrose, 2007**

- Departmental administrators should encourage faculty to clearly identify their own expectations and articulate the departmental expectations as explicitly and realistically as possible.
- Establish processes to re-examine both sets of expectations periodically to ensure they continue to be clear to all parties.
- Help faculty through potentially difficult transitions such as tenure, promotion, etc. Those transitions are where feelings of not being valued typically occur.

- Department chair talk to new faculty about difficulties in the career and retention in the organization
- Ensure the promotion and tenure processes are transparent to alleviate suspicions and fears
- Work to re-engage senior faculty by:
  - Designating time and space for intellectual exchange
  - Recognizing and celebrating faculty achievements
  - Empowering dissatisfied faculty to talk about problems

**C. Baldwin, DeZure, Shaw, & Moretto, 2008**

- University/college recommendations:
  - Modest amounts of discretionary funds to support mid-career faculty
  - Offer mentoring, mutual mentoring, sabbaticals, bridge funding, travel
  - More training and development for mid-career faculty
  - Newly tenured faculty want information on what to expect and what is expected of them, how to succeed, pitfalls to avoid and options to pursue
  - Training in leadership and managerial skills they need to succeed in new roles
  - New social networks to keep faculty engaged
- Department chair recommendations:
  - Training of chairs to understand the needs of mid-career faculty, how to motivate later mid-career faculty, and how to deal with thorny personnel, conflict management, and human-resource issues
  - Provide interpersonal support, guidance, problem-solving, mentoring, networking, bridge funding, rewards and motivation for faculty
  - Chairs should individualize and diversify approaches to support and tailor the support to the needs of each faculty member
  - Listen to each individual
  - Offer mentoring, mutual mentoring, sabbaticals, bridge funding, travel
  - Mid-career faculty may need help in changing areas of research due to the high cost of laboratories and equipment and the problem of getting funded in new areas
  - Consider a second start up package
  - Chairs and departmental faculty need to acknowledge differences in resource and professional growth opportunities and distribute discretionary resources, so that all faculty benefit

**III. References:**

- A. Modern Language Association (2009). *Standing Still: The Associate Professor Survey*. Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession. Web publication, [http://www.mla.org/assocprof\\_survey](http://www.mla.org/assocprof_survey)
- B. Huston, T.A., Norman, M., Ambrose, S.A. (2007). Expanding the Discussion of Faculty Vitality to Include Productive but Disengaged Senior Faculty. *Journal of Higher Education*, 78, 5 493-522. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/4501226>

- C. Baldwin, R., DeZure, D., Shaw, A. & Moretto, K. (2008). Mapping the Terrain of Mid-Career Faculty at a Research University: Implications for Faculty and Academic Leaders. *Change*, 2008, 46-55. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.3200/CHNG.40.5.46-55>