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Using the Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey to Improve Equity for Texas Tech Faculty

When Texas Tech University received its Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey results, the data pointed to issues on campus that administrators knew about only anecdotally. Putting numbers to what was happening on campus created a context that “is more acknowledging of problems and the need to mandate action for improvement, more receptive to the discussion,” said Stephanie Jones, Professor of Higher Education and Advisor to the Provost for Gender Equity.

TAKING ACTION ON EQUITY

Texas Tech’s Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey data indicated that departmental collegiality was an area that presented opportunities for improvement. In response, the administration has appointed two faculty fellows to work on enhancing existing and establishing new strategies for faculty recruitment, retention and success with a focus on faculty of color.

They are currently conducting surveys and focus groups of faculty and faculty administrators to ascertain prevalent barriers to tenure and promotion and any gaps between faculty and faculty administrators in recognizing and responding to these barriers. The faculty fellows are also advancing opportunities in support of faculty whose work includes the scholarship of engagement, one

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of the University's three strategic planning priorities. The fellows also work with deans, department chairs, and other university officers that deal with faculty recruitment, retention, and success.

Faculty Equity Advocates in Texas Tech's seven STEM colleges will also work specifically with faculty and promotion committees to advise on equity issues. The university used COACHE data "to help build a case for why these individuals were instrumental in helping to improve equity among faculty specifically within STEM colleges," Jones said. The advocates, funded by Texas Tech's NSF-ADVANCE grant, will work with deans and department chairs and advise faculty and administrators on equity issues that present challenges for faculty success.

The actions Texas Tech has taken in response to its Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey results are elements of larger DEI initiatives at the institution. Data from Texas Tech's own surveys on salary equity found significant gender and compression gaps, and the university administration in the summer of 2021 implemented a department-by-department plan to adjust salaries toward parity between female and male faculty within different faculty ranks.

DEPARTMENTAL DEVELOPMENTS

Texas Tech's Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey results also highlighted the need for additional support for department chairs, a position for which little specific training is offered at most institutions. As one response, the Office of the Provost launched the Chairs Council, a monthly meeting of all department chairs two or three times per semester at which chairs can share information and ideas and ensure that the administration is disseminating consistent information to all chairs at the same time. In addition, through TTU's ADVANCE grant, an onboarding process and chair mentoring program have been developed to help support knowledge advancement for new chairs.

Texas Tech plans to participate in the Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey again in February 2022 to assess its progress.

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