

# **Satisfaction with Departmental Climate among Junior STEM and Non-STEM Faculty at Brown University: A Comparison of 2006 and 2008 COACHE Reports**

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August 2011

## **Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education Survey (COACHE)**

Based at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and supported by the Ford Foundation, COACHE is committed to gathering the peer diagnostic and comparative data academic administrators need to recruit, retain, and develop the cohort most critical to the long-term future of their institutions.

In 2006, the COACHE survey was administered to all eligible (n=82) junior level faculty at Brown University. The final response rate at Brown was 68%. The survey was repeated in 2008 with a response rate of 74%. The results from Brown tenure-track faculty were then examine in aggregate with almost 4,500 other junior faculty from universities across the United States.

The survey asked several questions on a variety of categories including: (1) tenure clarity and fairness, (2) nature of workload, including research and teaching environment as well as quality of students, (3) effectiveness of key policies, including mentoring, childcare, leaves, etc., (4) compensation, (5) work and family balance, (6) collegiality, and (7) global stratification.

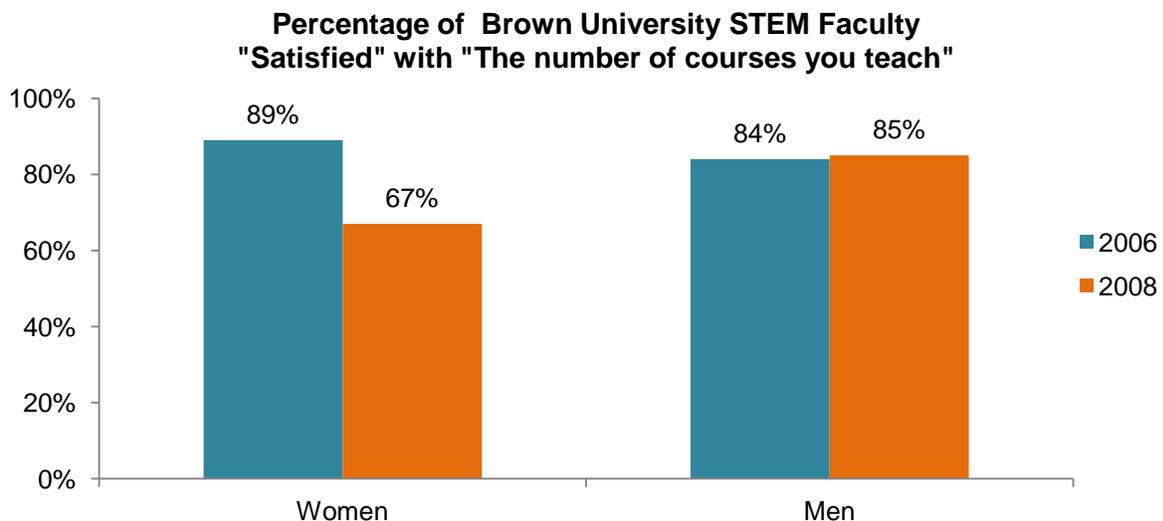
As compared to other peer institutions, Brown University was named an “exemplar” institution. In order to qualify as an “exemplar” university, Brown needed scores that were notably higher than similar institutions (n=31). Five universities (Auburn, Brown, Ohio State, Stanford, and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) achieved exemplary status in four of the seven categories detained above.

Brown University ranked highest amongst its peers in the categories “nature of work” and “global satisfaction.” It ranked second in the categories “tenure clarity” and “collegiality.”

First collected in 2006, the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) Survey captured tenure-track faculty members’ understandings of tenure and promotion practices and policies, satisfaction with research and teaching opportunities, and experiences of campus culture and collegiality. The following highlight additional analyses comparing the experiences of STEM and non-STEM faculty over time (from 2006 to 2008) as well as comparing levels of satisfaction with other NSF ADVANCE institutions mentoring opportunities.

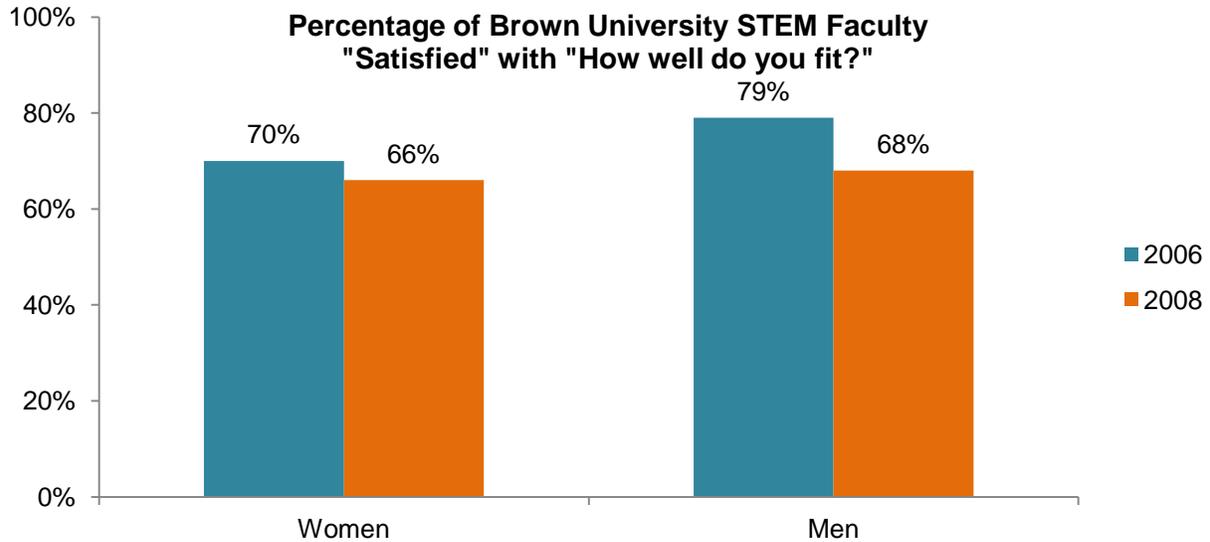
## Teaching

Junior faculty were asked a variety of questions regarding their satisfaction with the courses. From 2006 to 2008, the percent of junior STEM women faculty who were satisfied with the number of courses they teach declined from 89% to 67%. For junior men, this percentage remained relatively unchanged (from 84% to 85%). However, most junior faculty were satisfied with the level of courses they teach. In both survey years, all junior STEM women indicated they were either “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” as compared to men (87% in both years). Over the two survey years, there was a slight decrease (100% to 89%) among junior STEM women in terms of their satisfaction with the statement “the degree of influence you have over which courses you teach.” The percent of those satisfied remained unchanged for junior male STEM faculty. Overall, all STEM junior STEM faculty at Brown University are more satisfied with these aspects of teaching than compared to peers at other NSF ADVANCE institutions.

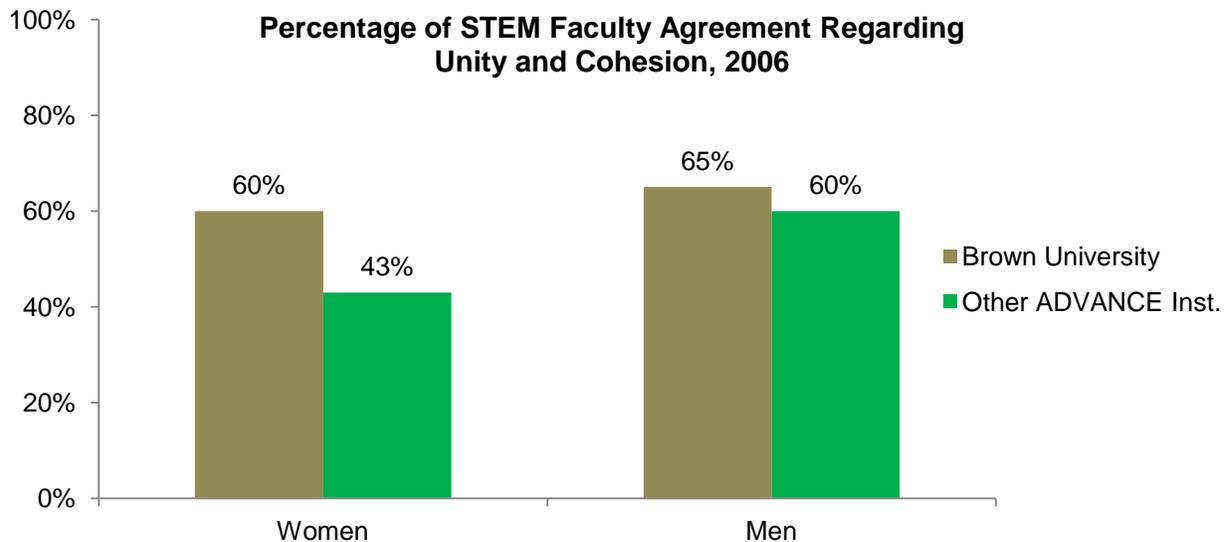


## Feelings of Inclusion and Cohesion

Junior faculty were asked a series of questions to assess feelings of inclusion and cohesion among faculty in their departments. In 2006, roughly three-quarters of all female and male faculty (STEM and non-STEM) indicated they were satisfied when responding to the statement “how well you fit” (ranging from 70% among STEM women to 79% among STEM men). However, two years later, the overall level of satisfaction in terms of fit declined for all STEM junior faculty (66% among STEM women, and 67% among STEM men). A similar decline over time was not found among non-STEM faculty. As compared to junior faculty at other NSF ADVANCE institutions, Brown STEM faculty are similarly satisfied with their level of fit.



In 2006, tenure-track faculty were also asked how much they agree with the following: “There is a feeling of unity and cohesion among the faculty in my department.” Almost two-thirds of junior STEM women and men agreed with the statement (60% of women and 65% of men). Comparisons over time are not available as this same question was not asked in 2008. As compared to other junior STEM women at other NSF ADVANCE institutions, Brown STEM women faculty indicate more unity and cohesion in their departments (43% agreement among peers at other institutions).



### **Professional and Personal Interactions**

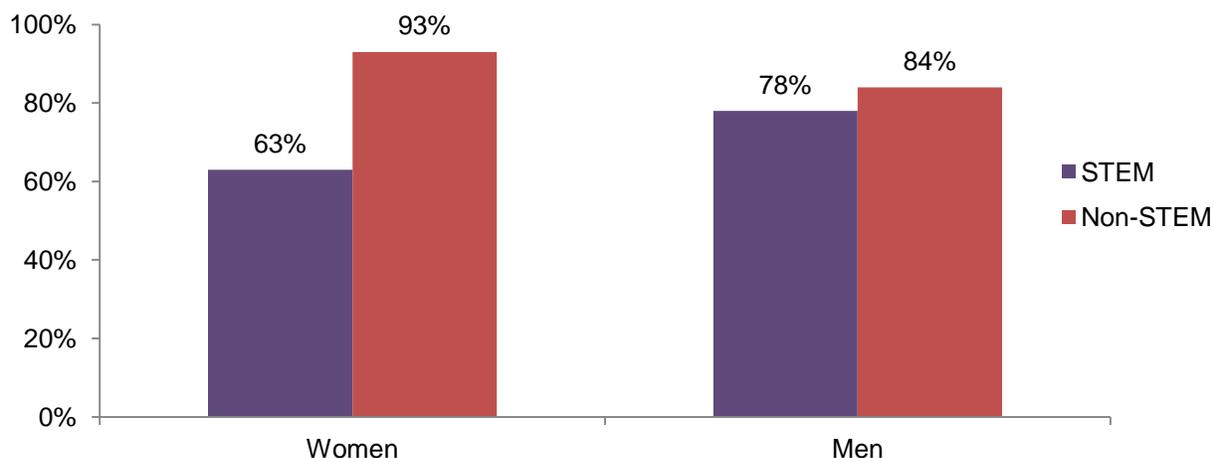
Tenure-track faculty were asked a series of questions gauging level of satisfaction with professional and personal interactions between themselves and senior and junior colleagues in their department. Overall, junior women STEM faculty were less satisfied with their professional and personal interactions with both senior and junior faculty in their departments than their male peers. In 2008, just over half (55%) of junior STEM women were satisfied with their professional interactions with senior colleagues in their department as compared to 84% of men. Similarly, just under half (44%) of junior STEM women were satisfied with the amount of professional interaction they had with junior colleagues in their department as compared to their male peers (76%).

In terms of personal interactions, junior faculty were slightly more satisfied. Women STEM faculty were more satisfied with the amount of personal interaction they have with other junior faculty (66%) than with senior faculty (55%). There is little difference for men (70% with senior faculty, 73% with junior faculty). Generally, level of satisfaction on a professional and personal level with other faculty members was lower among STEM junior faculty than among non-STEM. Junior faculty were also asked how satisfied they were with “The interest senior faculty take in your professional development. Tenure-track faculty in the STEM fields indicated lower levels of satisfaction with this statement as compared with non-STEM faculty. In 2006, over 80% of non-STEM tenure-track faculty were satisfied with the level of interest from senior faculty (82% of men and 85% of women), whereas about 60% of STEM faculty indicated the same (59% of men and 63% of women). Overall, the level of satisfaction with interest from senior faculty remained relatively the same from 2006 to 2008 with one notable exception. During this two year period, the percent of male junior faculty in the STEM fields who indicated they were satisfied with the level of interest from senior faculty increased from 59% to 78%.

### **Feelings of Fairness**

Feelings of fairness were assessed by asking junior faculty to indicate how satisfied they were with “the fairness of your immediate supervisor’s evaluation of your work” and if they agreed with the following statement: “On the whole, my department treats junior faculty fairly compared to one another.” In both survey years, junior faculty in the STEM fields were less satisfied with the fairness of the evaluation of their work as compared to non-STEM faculty. However, almost all STEM tenure-track faculty were in agreement with how fairly their department treats junior faculty members (80% of men and 88% of women).

### Percent of Brown University Faculty "Satisfied" with Fairness of Supervisor's Evaluation of Work, 2008



#### Overall Level of Satisfaction

Tenure-track faculty were asked both their level of satisfaction with their department as well as their institution. Overall, it appears junior STEM women are least satisfied with both their department and Brown University overall and this level of satisfaction has continued to decline over time. In 2006, 80% of STEM women faculty were satisfied with their department and with Brown. Two years later, this level of satisfaction declined to 66% with their department and 44% with Brown. By 2008, STEM women's level of satisfaction dipped below the overall level of satisfaction of STEM women at other NSF ADVANCE institutions. Similar declines in level of satisfaction with department or Brown were not found among STEM men or tenure-track faculty in the non-STEM fields.