Enhancing Departmental Climate: Structures, Cultures, Practices

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A Guide for Department Chairs*

January 2012

Background:
This guide is based on previous work conducted as part of the Iowa State University ADVANCE Institutional Transformation program’s Collaborative Transformation Project. Previous work was conducted by ISU ADVANCE Research Team members Sharon R. Bird, Carla J. Fehr, Lisa M. Larson, Florence Hamrick, Laura Rhoton and Molly Sween. For further information: Sharon R. Bird, Carla Fehr, Lisa M. Larson, and Molly Sween. 2011. ISU ADVANCE Collaborative Transformation Project: Final Focal Department Synthesis Report (April 2011). Iowa State University ADVANCE Program. Report available online at: http://www.advance.iastate.edu/resources/resources.shtml.

Citation Information:

*Contact: sbird@iastate.edu for more information about the ISU ADVANCE Collaborative Transformation Project.

*The research reported here was supported by a grant from the National Science Foundation SBE 0600399. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.
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Understanding Elements of a Healthy Departmental Climate

Introduction

Iowa State University received a National Science Foundation grant in 2006 for a five-year program called ISU ADVANCE. NSF ADVANCE Institutional Transformation grants are awarded to universities for the purpose of transforming institutional structures, cultures, and practices in ways that enhance the recruitment, retention, and promotion of women faculty, and when possible, underrepresented faculty of color in STEM disciplines. As part of this initiative, ISU ADVANCE researchers conducted the ADVANCE Collaborative Transformation (CT) project. The Collaborative Transformation project involved gathering interview data from nine Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) focal departments at ISU from fall 2006 thru spring 2011. These departments were Animal Science, Chemistry, Chemical and Biological Engineering, Civil, Construction and Environmental Engineering, Ecology, Evolution, and Organismal Biology, Genetics, Development and Cell Biology, and Materials Science Engineering, Physics and Astronomy, and Plant Pathology. Average participation among the faculty across the nine departments was 74.34 percent. Data were first analyzed separately by department and used to write individual departmental reports. After the separate departmental reports were completed, all of the data were analyzed collectively to identify issues that were salient across all departments. A synthesis report was then produced. The synthesis was not a merging of findings from each department, but rather represents only the issues common to all nine departments. The seven major findings across the departments were: (1) collegiality and the work environment; (2) faculty recruitment and hiring practices; (3) promotion and tenure structures and practices; (4) mentoring; (5) work-life balance; (6) faculty teaching loads, course distribution practices, and rewarding teaching; and (7) facilities, administrative support and technical support. This guide is based on these findings.

Elements of a Healthy Departmental Climate

1. Collegiality and the work environment.

Most faculty members use the term “collegiality” to refer to practices concerning respectfulness, civility, professionalism and shared purpose. The term is often invoked in discussions about expressing differing viewpoints during faculty meetings, supporting colleagues for award nominations, “pulling one’s weight” on departmental committees, and demonstrating a willingness to fill in for colleagues in cases of emergency or prolonged illness.

Assistant professors are most apt to express concerns about low collegiality because, in their view, the fewer the opportunities they have to interact with tenured faculty, the fewer the opportunities to benefit from tenured faculty members’ feedback and support. Assistant professors and Full professors who are nearing retirement are most likely to report having little knowledge about the work and lives of departmental colleagues, especially colleagues whose research interests differ from their own. Not all faculty members view a lack of familiarity with colleagues and colleagues’ work as problematic, but those who do often feel isolated and less satisfied with the work environment. Faculty who express
concerns about low collegiality note that it negatively impacts their ability to understand how important departmental decisions are made, awareness of others’ levels of service to the department, and awareness of criteria for promotion, tenure and pay raises.

Some factors that can lead to low collegiality include: departmental members being spread across multiple buildings, the size of the department, lack of “ground rules” for discussing contentious issues during faculty meetings, few or no departmental social functions, lack of common meeting spaces, irregular and infrequent faculty meetings, and lack of opportunities to collaborate with colleagues in research and/or teaching projects.

**Collegiality may be a concern** when one or more of the following circumstances exist:

- Minimal interaction exists between faculty members and departmental leaders or between junior and senior faculty.
- Only a small portion of the faculty actively participates during faculty meetings, on departmental committees, or in departmental searches, seminars and events.
- Only a small subset of the faculty voluntarily accepts departmental committee assignments.
- The membership of departmental committees remains static or rotates only minimally from one year to the next.
- Faculty willingness to assist other faculty members who are temporarily unable to teach a class or fulfill committee responsibilities is low.

2. **Faculty recruitment and hiring structures and practices.**

Faculty involvement in recruiting and hiring the very best faculty members is essential to a healthy departmental climate because most faculty members are highly invested in the future success of their department. Faculty recruitment and hiring processes involve multiple steps, including: (1) appointing a search committee; (2) developing a description of the job position; (3) posting the call for applications in appropriate outlets; (4) encouraging excellent candidates to apply; (5) evaluating applicants and developing an initial list of potential candidates; (6) if appropriate, holding preliminary telephone interviews with potential candidates; (7) narrowing the initial list of potential candidates to only the candidates the department wants to bring to campus for interviews; (8) holding on-campus interviews; (9) evaluating on-campus interview candidates and ranking the acceptable candidates; (10) extending an offer; and (11) negotiating an acceptable offer with the candidate.

Involving faculty in each of these steps while ensuring that everyone understands how to recruit and hire the best faculty is necessary. Regarding each step, keep in mind that viewpoints often differ on the issue of diversifying departmental faculty. For some, diversity refers simply to diversity of ideas, and for others it refers to diversity of backgrounds and life experiences. But for all faculty, recruiting and hiring excellent scholars who will help to enhance the stature of the department is vital. Identifying and encouraging excellent and diverse faculty usually requires more than a “business as usual” approach.

**Recruitment and hiring practices/processes may be a concern** when one or more of the following circumstances exist:

- The percentage of women faculty or underrepresented faculty of color in a department is much lower than the percentage of available PhDs or post-docs in the discipline or disciplinary sub-field.
- Applicant pools are derived primarily from current faculty members’ networks (without efforts to expand the pool to include candidates who are not likely to be in faculty members’ networks).
- Initial applicant pools are consistently much more diverse by gender, race and ethnicity than are short lists of candidates for on-site interviews.
Inconsistent criteria are used to evaluate candidates for inclusion on short lists or for determining which candidates to offer a job.

Faculty members’ rankings of candidates based on the sum total of specific criteria differ from faculty members’ rankings of candidates conducted apart from the use of specific criteria.

Lacking a rotation of members for departmental search committees from one year to the next (unless the lack of rotation is due simply to the fact that the department is very small).

Candidates of specific types of backgrounds (e.g., underrepresented minorities, new parents, women, people who have spouses or partners who also seek jobs in academia) consistently reject offers to come to ISU as new faculty members.

No options are made available for on-campus interview candidates to obtain information about family-friendly/work-life balance policies, mentoring for new faculty, and university and community climate for faculty of diverse backgrounds.

The department (and thus, the university) consistently loses top candidates because, according to candidates, competing offers from other universities include better salaries, start-up packages, partner accommodations, parental leave for new parents, etc.

**The attractiveness of ISU to potential job candidates may be a concern** when one or more of the following circumstances exist:

- Top candidates reject job offers or leave the university voluntarily because no accommodations are made for partners or spouses.
- Top candidates reject job offers, citing insufficient start-up packages or salaries as the reason for rejecting the offer.
- Top candidates reject job offers or leave the university voluntarily because they find their departments, the university, or the local community to be unwelcoming.
- Top candidates (including post-docs) reject job offers or leave the university voluntarily because childcare options are insufficient.
- Top candidates (including post-docs) reject job offers or leave the university voluntarily because the university lacks an accessible, adequately funded program for modifying the duties of new parents.

**3. Promotion, tenure and faculty evaluation processes.**

Few issues are as important to faculty as issues of promotion and tenure. Faculty who perceive the promotion and tenure criteria to be ambiguous or who are uncertain about how promotion and tenure processes operate are less satisfied in their roles as faculty members and may, in turn, detract from a healthy departmental climate. The most commonly noted issues regarding promotion and tenure procedures are as follows:

- Assistant professors more often receive input from colleagues about the importance of research productivity (publications and grants) to promotion and tenure and less often receive input about the importance of teaching and service. Newer faculty members, however, need input in each of these areas.
- Assistant professors often require assistance in putting together and “packaging” the appropriate materials for promotion and tenure dossiers.
- Many Associate professors are uncertain about the level of “national and international prominence” that they need to achieve in order to be promoted to Full professor and would benefit from having input about this issue from Full professors in the department.
- Assistant and Associate professors express the need for more departmental, college and university mechanisms for comparing personal accomplishments with those of other faculty of the same rank, or of the rank they wish to be promoted to.
• Faculty members who are asked and subsequently accept greater teaching, advising and service responsibilities relative to other departmental faculty members may feel disadvantaged in promotion and tenure processes because they are left with less time to devote to research and to pursuing external funding.
• Faculty members are sometimes unaware of ISU’s work-life or “family friendly” policies as they relate to tenure and promotion.
  o ISU policy states that faculty members have the right to extend the tenure clock for the birth or adoption of a child or for other personal and/or family-related reasons. Some faculty members may also negotiate with their departments to modify their teaching duties during the semester or year in which a child is born or adopted.
  o Among some faculty who are familiar with ISU’s family friendly policies, there is skepticism about whether using this policy is truly beneficial to the person who delays her/his tenure decision.
  o Some faculty report being confused about how to evaluate faculty members who have delayed their tenure clock.
  o Many faculty report that because successful promotion and tenure often relies on obtaining grant funding, the ability for faculty members to take time off is reduced due to responsibilities surrounding grant-funded research.
  o Some faculty note that taking parental leave, especially if it reduces one’s teaching load, places undue burden on other faculty members who may then have a more negative view of the faculty member taking time off, which in turn can impact their promotion and tenure.

The most commonly noted issues regarding faculty annual reviews and evaluations are as follows:

• Assistant professors report that department Chairs provide the most helpful and consistent feedback about personal performance and about promotion and tenure expectations and processes.
• Assistant professors’ experiences with departmental evaluation committees (comprised of other faculty members) vary. Consistently active P&T committees that provide Assistant professors with constructive feedback are viewed as most helpful.
• The types of departmental mentoring that Assistant professors find most helpful include: feedback on grant applications; tips on managing graduate students; strategies for balancing teaching, research and service obligations; information about family-friendly and work-life balance policies; and how to increase time for research activities.
• Associate and Full professors’ concerns about faculty reviews and evaluations center less on the kinds of feedback that they receive from departmental evaluation committees because they meet less often with such committees. Associate professors are more concerned that annual faculty evaluations with the department Chair involve tailored feedback about what she or he is doing well and what she or he needs to do better in order to be promoted or to receive larger salary increases.
• Some Full professors note a need for annual evaluations with the department Chair that include tailored discussions about what they need to achieve in order to receive salary increases.

Promotion, tenure and evaluation practices may be a concern when one or more of the following circumstances exist:
• Assistant professors express concerns to the department Chair or other tenured faculty members about the clarity of promotion and tenure expectations or processes.
• No departmental mechanisms (e.g., a handbook or orientation session) exists for providing Assistant professors with feedback regarding the relative value placed on teaching, research and service in promotion and tenure processes, and regarding their own performance in each of these areas.
The amount of time that Assistant professors are spending on research, teaching and service activities is inconsistent with the amount of time designated in their Position Responsibility Statements (PRS) for those activities.

The level of research productivity or teaching excellence of Assistant professors consistently falls below expected levels of productivity and excellence.

Departmental records documenting the relative performances of faculty (by rank) or records documenting the criteria used for assessing performance levels are inconsistent or unorganized, or such documents are unavailable or difficult to access.

Communication is lacking between the department Chair and the faculty regarding:
  o the purpose of annual evaluations between the Chair and the faculty member;
  o the purpose of meetings between annual review committees and Assistant professors;
  o the purpose of meetings between post-tenure review committees and tenured faculty.

The department has never or has irregularly held faculty discussions about ISU’s family friendly policies, how to use them and how to evaluate those who use them.

4. Mentoring.

Faculty mentoring is viewed differently across colleges, departments, and disciplines. Mentoring of faculty, especially Assistant professors, contributes positively to departmental climate when mentoring practices are constructive and supportive; when the mentor and mentee mutually agree on the goals and expectations of the relationship; when the mentor and mentee meet regularly; and when the mentee has both formal and informal within and outside their home department.

Mentoring for Assistant professors is more common than for Associate professors. Associate professors, however, commonly express a desire for mentoring. Most tenured faculty are happy to give advice to Assistant professors in their departments when they are asked, but are not always certain about how best to advise junior faculty or the extent to which individual faculty members “need” mentoring. Faculty members often express the belief that mentoring need not be completely structured in order to work. The most commonly noted issues regarding mentoring are as follows:

- Inconsistencies in mentoring are more common when departmental offices, labs, and classrooms are spread across multiple buildings. Assistant professors’ abilities to obtain relevant information about tenure and promotion from senior colleagues may be especially hindered under these conditions.

- Assistant professors appreciate departmental meetings and seminars because they provide opportunities for faculty to interact formally and informally and help them get to know senior faculty who may be able to provide information about promotion and tenure and other issues pertinent to academic success.

- Promoting good mentoring practices is especially difficult in departments that embrace the idea that because the department only hires the very best scholars, mentoring is not necessary. Debunking this belief may be required before positive mentoring can occur.

- However, in departments where formal mentoring is not emphasized, other mechanisms for helping faculty members to understand performance expectations may be implemented. These include:
  o constructive and detailed annual performance reviews by the department chair
  o making departmental promotion and tenure portfolios publicly available;
  o appointing a departmental committee (annually) comprised of a large number of the faculty (including Assistant professors) to review the CVs of all departmental faculty members and provide feedback to the department Chair regarding the relative annual accomplishments of departmental faculty.
Some Associate professors desire mentoring for promotion to Full professor—especially those who report that they receive little feedback or inconsistent messages from departmental Full professors about whether their professional accomplishments are sufficient for promotion and about when to seek promotion to Full.

Some Associate professors believe that a reasonable alternative to formal mentoring for Associate professors would be to make the CVs and/or dossiers of faculty members (in the same or similar disciplines) recently promoted to Full professor widely available for review.

Department Chairs report that ensuring good mentoring is difficult when not all senior faculty are willing to actively mentor junior faculty and when the department has few tenured professors.

**Mentoring of faculty may be a concern** when one or more of the following circumstances exist:

- Faculty offices, laboratories and/or classrooms are spread across multiple buildings on campus and departmental faculty gather only infrequently for meetings, colloquia, etc.
- The department widely embraces the notion that as long as a department hires only highly qualified faculty members, no formal mentoring is needed, and is characterized by any of the points previously noted above.
- The department has no guidelines or orientation procedures in place for helping new faculty to understand basic departmental functions, including:
  - where to obtain support for enhancing teaching skills;
  - procedures by which departmental decisions about teaching assignments and the advising of undergraduates (if applicable) are made;
  - whom to ask about issues pertaining to graduate students;
  - where to direct questions about grant writing;
  - which departmental support personnel are responsible for various support functions.
- The department has few or no formal mechanisms for enabling faculty members to accurately assess for themselves whether they are meeting performance expectations in key areas of evaluation, or to determine for themselves how well they are performing in their positions relative to other faculty members of the same rank.
- The department has few or no formal mechanisms for ensuring that Assistant professors understand whom to ask about departmental operations, how to balance the different areas of job responsibilities, or about the criteria for promotion and tenure.
- The department consistently has Assistant professors who fail to receive tenure and promotion.
- Associate professors remain in rank as Associate professor more than 6-7 years, AND the department has few or no formal mechanisms for enabling faculty members to accurately assess:
  - how well they are performing relative to other same-rank faculty members;
  - whether they are meeting performance expectations in key areas of evaluation.
- Responsibilities for mentoring are unevenly spread across the tenured professors in the department, or when there are few or no tenured faculty in the department.

5. **Work-life balance.**

Most all faculty (across ranks) support, in principal, the idea that university work cultures and structures should not impede faculty members’ efforts to effectively balance work and other life responsibilities. Departmental climate is more positive when most faculty members believe that they have a healthy work-life balance. The most commonly noted issues regarding work-life balance are as follows:
• Faculty members who have/are seeking on-going, grant-funded research projects often view the boundaries between “work life” and “home life” as weak. This is especially true in departments that embrace long and often irregular work hours as part of their culture.
• Faculty members who have children living at home with them and/or aging relatives for whom they provide care and who are expected to work long hours on campus or travel extensively often express work-life balance frustrations.
• Faculty members’ use of ISU’s work-life/family friendly policies help to moderate negative perceptions of work-life balance. Use of these policies, however, may not completely erase the concerns that faculty have about work-life balance because not all faculty members’ career paths and/or departmental cultures allow faculty members to effectively use these policies.
  o Delaying a tenure clock or taking time off at the birth or adoption of a child may not be possible given the research and travel demands of the faculty member’s academic discipline.
  o If not all departmental faculty are aware of ISU’s existing work-life/family friendly policies, those who wish to use the policies may fear that their colleagues will not know how to evaluate someone who uses these policies and then goes up for tenure and/or promotion.
  o Some faculty observe that delaying the tenure clock may be viewed as “unprofessional” if it places undue burden on the faculty members having to teach for an individual taking time off.
  o Some faculty observe that family leave requests have been handled on a case by case basis and that decisions have been inconsistent.
  o Some faculty noted that hiring temporary instructors for faculty on leave is not financially possible for the department (especially given ISU’s recent budget cuts).
  o Some faculty express concern over how faculty will be evaluated when it comes time for tenure and promotion if they have taken a leave or delayed a tenure clock.

Work-life balance and use of ISU’s family friendly policies may be a concern when one or more of the following circumstances exist:
• ISU work-life and family friendly policies have not been discussed with the faculty at a faculty meeting in recent memory.
• Departmental faculty members rarely or never ask the department Chair for information about or assistance in using ISU’s work-life or family friendly policies.
• The department regularly schedules departmental meetings early in the morning, late in the afternoon, on weekends, or during holidays and faculty members with children living at home or other family care responsibilities irregularly or never attend.
• Departmental promotion and tenure evaluation committees never or irregularly discusses university guidelines for evaluating faculty members who are on part-time faculty appointments, who utilize ISU’s policy for delaying the tenure clock or who negotiate to have their teaching duties modified temporarily so that they can take care of a newly born or adopted child.
• Faculty members who use ISU’s family-friendly policies are denied tenure/promotion.

6. Teaching loads, course distribution practices and rewarding teaching.

Faculty members across ranks stress the importance of excellence in teaching. Some faculty of all ranks also stress the need for greater transparency in:
• The ways in which teaching assignments (courses and loads) are made.
• The criteria by which “excellence” in teaching is determined.
• How teaching influences tenure and promotion decisions and annual salary increases.
• How credit for teaching and teaching-related activities (e.g., advising) is allocated.
Faculty members’ perceptions of transparency in teaching assignments, loads, and rewards vary across ranks. Assistant, Associate and Lecturer/Adjunct faculty expressed greater concern about teaching-related issues than Full professors. The more transparency that faculty members perceive regarding teaching assignments, the more apt they are to believe that teaching assignments, loads, and rewards are fair. Increased faculty concerns about transparency in teaching assignments over the past few years coincides with university budget cuts and concerns about maintaining the quality of teaching even as faculty are expected to teach more students. Some faculty, especially at the Assistant professor rank, also expressed a desire for greater clarity in how teaching “excellence” is assessed in their departments.

**Faculty teaching loads, course distribution practices and rewarding teaching may be a concern** if one or more of the following circumstances exist:

- Procedures for determining course loads are not discussed regularly with departmental faculty.
- Faculty Position Responsibility Statements (PRS) do not accurately reflect the level of contribution to departmental teaching that each faculty member is expected to make.
- The criteria by which “excellence” in teaching is evaluated are neither stated in departmental documents nor communicated verbally to all departmental faculty on a consistent basis.
- No mechanisms exist within the department for rewarding excellent teaching or for helping faculty who need to improve their teaching to understand how to do so or where to go for assistance.
- Differing assumptions exist among departmental faculty members regarding how teaching assignments are made, course loads are determined, and/or the relative value of and reward structures for teaching (especially as they pertain to promotion and tenure or salary decisions).

7. **Facilities, administrative support and technical support.**

Whereas many faculty report feeling satisfied with the office, lab, teaching and meeting spaces offered by their departments, others report that improvements in these areas would enhance their teaching, research, and overall job satisfaction. Meeting and socializing spaces are an important aspect of work facilities because they often provide opportunities for developing collegial relationships among faculty and for mentoring of newer faculty.

- Many faculty note that the dispersion of faculty across multiple buildings creates difficulties for the department in finding mutually agreeable meeting times, developing intellectual community, information sharing, collaboration, mentoring and socializing.
- Some faculty note that inadequate classroom space exists for the size and types of classes taught.
- Some faculty members report that lab space is scarce, that some lab spaces are not up to safety codes, or that there are electrical, plumbing or other problems with the space.
- Faculty members across departments report that the administrative and technical support received by faculty members is sometimes uneven.
- Newer faculty members report that they would benefit from an orientation or departmental guide regarding the kinds of support available to departmental faculty and explicit explanations of whom to go to for specific types of support.

**Facilities, administrative and technical support may be a concern** if one or more of the following circumstances exist:

- Faculty members are dispersed across multiple buildings and the department holds few departmental meetings/seminars.
- Courses offered by the department consistently enroll more students than available (properly equipped) classrooms and laboratories are able to accommodate.
- The department has inadequate mechanisms for ensuring that lab spaces are up to safety codes.
• The department has no mechanisms for ensuring that faculty members understand how decisions about the distribution of office space are made.

• The department does not regularly discuss with the faculty (especially newer faculty members) which administrative and technical support staff are responsible for certain tasks and activities.

**Addressing potential problems.** In departments where facilities, administrative support or technical support are a concern, the following strategies may help to address these problems:

• When departmental faculty members are dispersed across multiple buildings (or floors in buildings), departmental Chairs may wish to take proactive steps to create spaces and time periods for junior faculty and tenured faculty to interact face-to-face with one another. Among the many ways to accomplish this are:
  o department Chairs may wish to organize informal meetings with Assistant professors to discuss issues of departmental norms, policies, and tenure and promotion evaluation processes;
  o department Chairs may wish to organize more regular faculty meetings and seminars;
  o faculty members may wish to hold regular social gatherings;
  o departments may wish to hold faculty retreats so that faculty members can discuss their respective research programs and realize opportunities for collaboration.

• As a routine part of scheduling courses and assigning classrooms and labs, departmental teaching coordinators and/or committees may wish to report back to the faculty as a whole on the process by which room assignments are made (and the limitations to scheduling that result from forces beyond the control of the department).

• Departments may wish to form committees (or empower an existing committee) to work specifically on developing procedures (or for enforcing existing procedures) regarding the allocation, maintenance and safety of facilities for teaching and research.

• The department may wish to annually discuss with the faculty which administrative and technical support staff are responsible for certain tasks and activities.

### Strategies for Enhancing Departmental Climate

#### 1. Collegiality and the work environment.

Departments hoping to enhance collegiality, tap the range of faculty members’ viewpoints and potential contributions, and enhance faculty members’ job satisfaction and job commitment may benefit by implementing the following types of procedures:

• Holding regular faculty meetings that focus on key departmental issues and that enable newer and more junior faculty to better understand departmental operating procedures.

• Holding regular seminars at which faculty members present and discuss their research.

• Regularly reviewing/posting a list of “best practices” for efficient faculty meetings.

• Designating a faculty member at each faculty meeting to facilitate dialogue in a manner that encourages respect for colleagues and equitable opportunities for diverse ideas from the full range of faculty participants.

• Increasing transparency regarding teaching assignments and rewards associated with teaching.

• Department Chairs may wish to have discussions with the faculty about the teaching needs of the department in conjunction with faculty input about how to meet departmental teaching needs.

• Clarifying with the faculty the process and criteria regarding tenure and promotion decisions and annual salary increases (see Finding 3 below).
- Increasing transparency in decision-making regarding faculty recruitment, hiring and retention (see Finding 2 below).
- Encouraging faculty members to proactively learn more about colleagues’ research (e.g., review grant proposals, attend research presentations).
- Facilitating collaborations among faculty in the department and across departmental units.
- Encouraging faculty members to schedule meetings during regular working hours so that colleagues who have children at home are able to sufficiently manage work and family/life responsibilities.
- Encouraging faculty to become more familiar with ISU’s work-life and family-friendly policies.

2. Faculty recruitment and hiring structures and practices.

Remember that few faculty members feel that they have time to learn about strategies for enhancing applicant pools, ensuring transparency in recruitment and hiring processes, and ensuring that on-campus candidates of diverse backgrounds have a positive interview experience. Thus, taking pro-active steps to involve faculty members in search committee training on an on-going basis is necessary. To help ensure that all faculty members are able to play an active and helpful role in recruiting and hiring the best faculty, Chairs can (a) encourage faculty to participate in workshops about recruiting and hiring the best and most diverse faculty; and (b) invite an Equity Advisor (listed in the front of this document) to share with the department resources about faculty recruitment and hiring. In departments where recruiting and hiring problems exist, the following strategies may help to address these problems:

- If applicant pools are derived primarily from current faculty members’ networks and/or initial applicant pools are consistently much more diverse by gender, race and ethnicity than are short lists of candidates for on-site interviews (over the course of multiple searches), the department may wish to expand candidate pools to include candidates who are not likely to be in faculty members’ networks. For more information, the department may wish to review resources for faculty recruitment provided on the ISU Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost website (http://www.provost.iastate.edu/faculty/) or go directly to the ISU EVPP Resource Guide for Recruiting Excellent and Diverse Faculty (http://www.provost.iastate.edu/office/resource/appendix7.html).

- In some cases, inconsistent criteria are being used to evaluate candidates for inclusion on short lists and for determining which candidates to offer a job. In other cases, faculty are asked to provide a rank ordering of candidates for short lists and job offers but are not being asked to provide an assessment of each candidate based on specific criteria and to then justify their overall rankings based on those specified criteria. Under either of these circumstances, the department may wish to:
  - hold faculty meetings that involve the discussion of each candidate’s (or short list of candidates’) strengths as well as weaknesses to help minimize the potential effects of unintended biases;
  - use ranking forms that require each faculty member to rank each candidate’s criteria and to then justify the overall ranking of candidates based on these criteria;
  - review resources for faculty recruitment provided on the ISU Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost website (http://www.provost.iastate.edu/faculty/) or go directly to the ISU EVPP Resource Guide for Recruiting Excellent and Diverse Faculty (http://www.provost.iastate.edu/office/resource/appendix7.html). The Resource Guide for Recruiting Excellent and Diverse Faculty includes examples of Candidate Evaluation Rubric Forms that departments can adapt for their own purposes.

- If the department rarely rotates members of departmental search committees from one year to the next (even though the department is large enough to rotate members of such committees), the department may wish to consider rotating committee members more often.
• Use existing “best practices” for highlighting ISU’s family friendly and work-life balance policies, such as those outlined in the on-line resource “ISU Policies and Guidelines for Flexible Faculty Careers: Resources for Chairs & Deans” (Harris, Carlson and Bowen 2009): http://www.advance.iastate.edu/worklife/worklife.shtml.
• If candidates of specific types of backgrounds (e.g., URMs, etc.) consistently turn down offers to come to ISU as new faculty members, the department, college and university may want to:
  o consider new mechanisms for ensuring that job candidates receive ample information about ISU’s family-friendly/work-life balance policies, mentoring programs for new faculty, and university/community diversity organizations, programs, and activities;
  o discuss, identify and implement department-level guidelines that might clarify the department’s long-term commitment to a family-friendly workplace.

3. Promotion, tenure and faculty evaluation processes.

In departments where promotion, tenure and salary adjustment concerns exist, the following strategies may help to address these problems:

• Department Chairs may wish to meet annually/bi-annually with Assistant professors to discuss concerns that Assistant professors express about promotion/ tenure processes.
• Departments may wish to hold discussions over criteria and corresponding reward structures used for the evaluation of teaching, research, professional practice and service as these relate specifically to promotion, tenure and annual salary increases.
• Departments may wish to reassess current departmental mechanisms for providing feedback to Assistant professors regarding expectations for tenure and promotion and each faculty members’ progress toward promotion and tenure.
• Departments may wish to discuss annually and perhaps outline in their departmental governance document (or a departmental faculty handbook) department-specific steps involved in, and general expectations for, tenure and promotion (which must be consistent with college and university guidelines), including:
  o minimum criteria for research, teaching, professional practice and service competency for tenure, promotion to Associate, and promotion to Full;
  o relative value placed within the department on research, teaching, professional practice, and service;
  o relative value placed among faculty within the department regarding different publication outlets; and
  o relative value placed within the department on different forms of external funding.
• Department Chairs may wish to evaluate with each faculty member in the department his/her PRS to ensure that it corresponds accurately with each faculty member’s scholarly contributions to teaching, research, service and other forms of professional practice.
• Departments may wish to annually discuss at a faculty meeting current ISU work-life and family friendly policies, how to use them and how to appropriately evaluate those who use them.
  o Departments may also wish to discuss (or invite an ADVANCE Equity Advisor (see p. 2 for a list) to come and speak about) the potential benefits and costs to the faculty member associated with using these policies (given each faculty member’s current career stage and career goals).
  o Departments may also wish to discuss the benefits of work-life and family friendly policies to the department itself (e.g., enhancing recruitment and retention of faculty and increasing faculty job satisfaction).
• For more information, see the on-line resource “ISU Policies and Guidelines for Flexible Faculty Careers: Resources for Chairs & Deans” (Harris, Carlson and Bowen 2009): http://www.provost.iastate.edu/fad/docs/flexiblefacultycareersresource.pdf. Department Chairs may want to develop and implement measures for tracking and comparing faculty members’ annual productivity levels in key performance areas.
  o Departmental grids (for comparing relative performance levels) may be developed that include indicators for the number of courses/students taught, number of graduate students/post docs funded/graduated, number/ amount of grants, number of research publications, and number of departmental/college/university committees.

4. Mentoring faculty.

In departments where mentoring concerns exist, the following strategies may help:
• If the department has no formal mentoring or uneven/insufficient mentoring for Assistant professors and would like to enhance mentoring practices, the faculty may wish to discuss ISUs “Mentoring Support for New Tenure-Eligible Faculty” document and related documents found on the ISU Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost website:
  o http://www.provost.iastate.edu/faculty/newfaculty/EVPPMentoringProgramBrochureNov2010.pdf
  o http://www.provost.iastate.edu/faculty/newfaculty/
• If the department has no formal mentoring or uneven/insufficient mentoring for Associate professors and would like to enhance mentoring practices for this group of faculty, the department may wish to explore different options for mentoring Associate professors regarding promotion to Full professor:
  o encourage faculty to attend college and university-sponsored workshops regarding promotion to Full professor (when possible);
  o explore options for developing department-level mentoring groups or pairs specifically for Associate professors (some departments across campus are already engaged in this practice).
• In addition to existing mentoring efforts, departments may wish to make promotion and tenure portfolios available to any faculty member who wishes to examine them; this contributes positively to faculty members’ understandings of criteria for promotion, tenure and annual salary increases.
• Departments may consider appointing a large (6-8 faculty) departmental committee comprised of an annually rotating group of faculty members of all ranks to review the CVs of all departmental tenure-track and tenured faculty members each year. In so doing the department can help to ensure that all faculty gain a firm understanding of departmental expectations for promotion and tenure.
  o The department Chair may, in addition, ask this committee to provide basic feedback regarding faculty members’ performance (e.g., categorizing faculty productivity as relatively ‘above average’, ‘average’, or ‘below average’ each year) making sure that Assistant as well as Associate and Full professors are represented on the committee.
• The department Chair may wish to develop and use a matrix for comparing faculty members’ annual performance and make the matrix available to the all departmental faculty.
  o The matrix would ideally include specific performance criteria based on those areas of performance that influence outcomes including teaching loads, faculty pay raises, promotion, and tenure.
• The department may wish to develop a guide or manual for new faculty members that outlines departmental procedures, the responsibilities of all departmental support staff, and where to obtain support for teaching, grant writing, professional practice, and research.
• Departments may also wish to establish annual or bi-annual meetings among departmental mentors to share information about mentoring and mentoring strategies.
• Departments may also wish to advocate for more college- or university-wide mentoring workshops for Assistant and Associate professors, and college-wide or university-wide training for mentors.

5. Work-life balance and family friendly policies.

In departments where work-life and family friendly policy concerns exist, the following strategies may help to address these concerns:

• Departments may wish to review annually during faculty meetings the current university procedures for extension of the tenure clock, part-time tenure, modifying teaching duties for faculty who have small children, and partner accommodations. For more information, see the on-line resource “ISU Policies and Guidelines for Flexible Faculty Careers: Resources for Chairs & Deans” (Harris, Carlson and Bowen 2009): http://www.provost.iastate.edu/fad/docs/flexiblefacultycareersresource.pdf.
• Departments may wish to hold discussions aimed at developing department-specific guidelines for providing release time during periods of family leave.
• Departments may wish to draft guidelines for providing family leave to faculty within the context of university guidelines.
• Departments may wish to hold faculty discussions about how work-life issues affect faculty members whose parents and other extended family members require care for prolonged illnesses and other life events.
• Departments may wish to hold faculty discussion about ISU’s guidelines for evaluating faculty who utilize ISU’s work-life and family friendly policies, especially those who delay the tenure clock or are on a part-time tenure appointment.
• Departments may wish to avoid scheduling departmental meetings (or meetings of departmental committees) during times that are impossible or extremely difficult for parents of children who are still living at home to attend.

6. Teaching loads, course distribution practices and rewarding teaching.

In departments where faculty teaching loads, course distribution practices and/or rewards for teaching are a concern, the following strategies may help to address these concerns:

• Departments may benefit from sharing information regarding average teaching loads for faculty and the number and type of courses taught by each faculty member each year.
• Departments may benefit from rotating faculty through curriculum committees.
• Departments that share information regarding faculty teaching responsibilities would be advised to also contextualize work responsibilities of faculty members, stressing that not all faculty members:
  o share the same kind of academic appointment;
  o are supported at the same level by grants and contracts;
  o serve on the same number of university, department and student committees;
  o support/work with the same number of graduate students, or advise undergraduate students;
  o teach courses that require the same time and effort investment.
• Departments may wish to discuss the criteria by which teaching “excellence” is evaluated.
• Departments may wish to create departmental awards to document and publicly recognize especially meaningful contributions in service or teaching.
• Departments may benefit from the development of a departmental strategic plan—developed with extensive faculty participation—that describes concretely the values placed on research, teaching, outreach and service.
• Departments may benefit from a review of faculty position responsibility statements to ensure that they accurately reflect the level of each faculty member’s contribution to departmental teaching.
In addition, departments may wish to consider implementing strategies that help newer faculty members to establish excellent teaching skills. These strategies may include:

- Assigning newer faculty to teach the same course repeatedly during their initial 2-3 years.
- Taking proactive steps to orient new faculty with regard to the processes by which courses and course loads are assigned and how course release time (if applicable) may be acquired.
- Communicating low departmental/college/university service expectations during the first few years to help ensure that newer faculty are able to establish their teaching and research programs.

7. Facilities, administrative support and technical support.

In departments where facilities, administrative support or technical support are a concern, the following strategies may help to address these problems:

- When departmental faculty members are dispersed across multiple buildings (or floors in buildings), departmental Chairs may wish to take proactive steps to create spaces and time periods for junior faculty and tenured faculty to interact face-to-face with one another. Among the many ways to accomplish this are:
  - department Chairs may wish to organize informal meetings with Assistant professors to discuss issues of departmental norms, policies, and tenure and promotion evaluation processes;
  - department Chairs may wish to organize more regular faculty meetings and seminars;
  - faculty members may wish to hold regular social gatherings;
  - departments may wish to hold faculty retreats so that faculty members can discuss their respective research programs and realize opportunities for collaboration.

- As a routine part of scheduling courses and assigning classrooms and labs, departmental teaching coordinators and/or committees may wish to report back to the faculty as a whole on the process by which room assignments are made (and the limitations to scheduling that result from forces beyond the control of the department).

- Departments may wish to form committees (or empower an existing committee) to work specifically on developing procedures (or for enforcing existing procedures) regarding the allocation, maintenance and safety of facilities for teaching and research.

- The department may wish to annually discuss with the faculty which administrative and technical support staff are responsible for certain tasks and activities.