

Report on Faculty Women's Caucus 2021 Survey

Faculty Women's Caucus Working Group, May 5, 2021
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Introduction

The Faculty Women's Caucus (FWC) at the University of Vermont (UVM) conducted a survey in April 2021 to collect faculty observations concerning current campus climate and working conditions at UVM. In line with its focus since its founding in 1992, the FWC focused the survey on the experiences of FWC members, faculty women, LGBTQ+ faculty, and BIPOC faculty at UVM. The purpose is to collect information about the experiences of faculty at UVM in order to make suggestions to help the university to improve.

Methods and Sample

Designed by faculty with expertise in survey research, the survey contained 45 questions, with about half focusing on campus climate and working conditions and the rest on respondent demographics. 37 of the questions were multiple-choice/answer, and eight of the questions were open-ended.

The survey was distributed to several university listservs that serve faculty who identify as women, LGBTQ+, or BIPOC. The survey was open from April 2 to 13, 2021. Starting on April 2 and 3 the survey link was sent to the FWC member listserv, the Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies (GSWS) faculty listserv, and the UVM BIPOC faculty listserv. On April 9, it was also distributed on United Academics Member Chat listserv.

The vast majority of the 108 faculty respondents identified as women, LGBTQ+, or BIPOC. Specifically, 94 identified as faculty women, four as faculty men, and two as gender queer or non-binary, with the remainder no response. 11 respondents identified as LGBTQ+, and 14 identified as BIPOC. 79 respondents identified as current FWC members or intending to join. 45 respondents identified as coming from low-income or working class backgrounds. While the survey was only distributed to and filled out by a subset of UVM faculty, its findings are important because the sample captures the observations of historically underrepresented faculty.

Respondents included faculty from each of UVM's eight colleges. The highest number came from CAS with 49 respondents. From the other colleges, 10 were from LCOM, 8 from CESS, 6 from RSENR, 5 each from CALS, CEMS, and CNHS, and 1 from GSB; 19 respondents did not report their college affiliation. The vast majority of the respondents were full-time faculty, but a handful of part-time faculty participated, too. About half of the sample was tenured, and the other half was untenured or non-tenure track. Length of time at UVM ranged from less than two years to more than thirty years. With respect to type of work, respondents were engaged in teaching undergraduate and graduate students, advising, research, service, clinical, and administrative work. Respondent's main fields of

teaching/research were most commonly the humanities, STEM, or social sciences, but respondents also reported engagement in the fields of health, environment/agriculture/food, education/social work, the arts, and business. Over half of the respondents reported being in a department or program that had been cut or merged into another or proposed to be cut or merged.

Key Quantitative Results

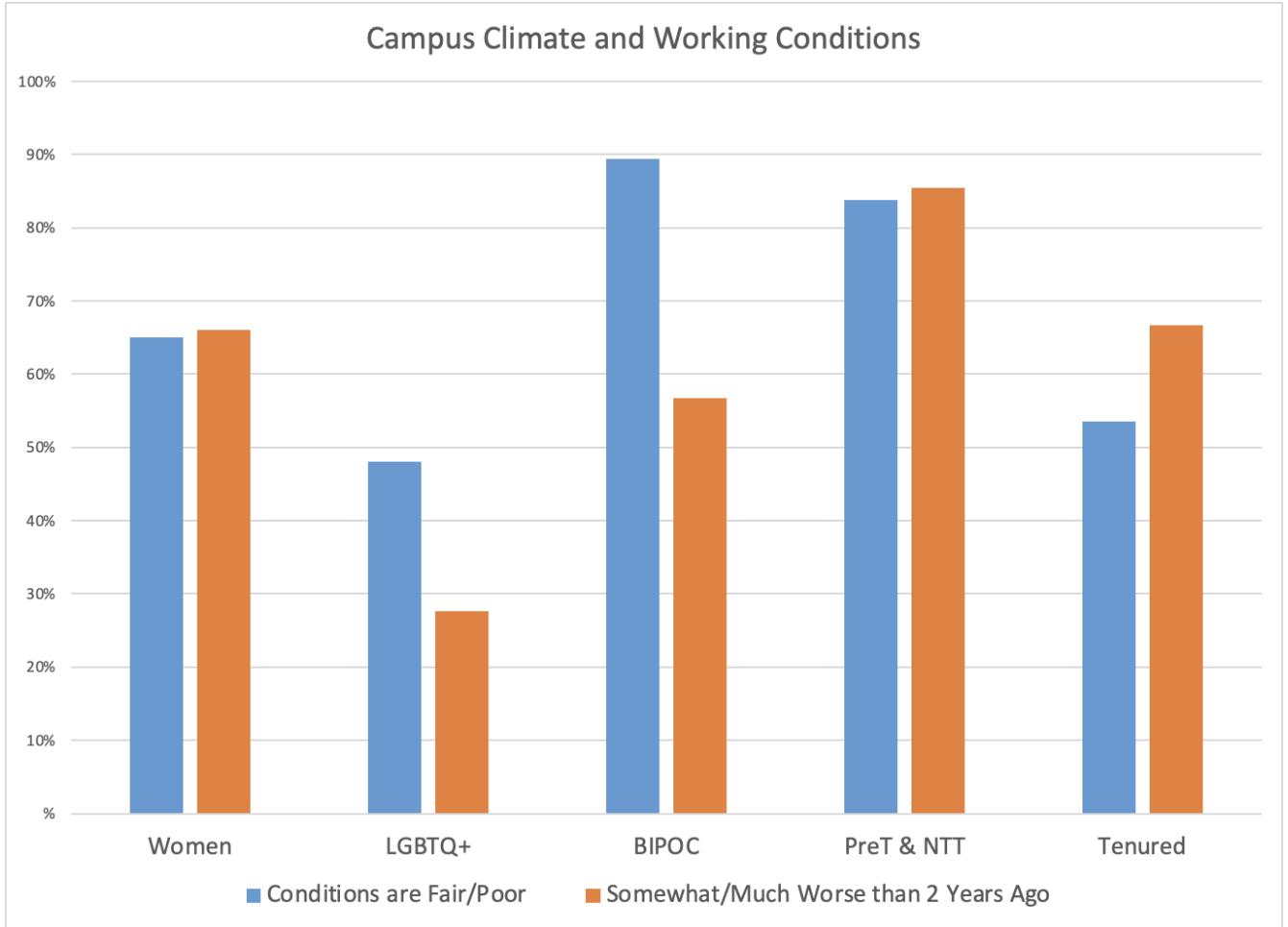
In this section, the quantitative results from the multiple choice/answer question are provided. In a section after this, the corresponding qualitative results are presented. In general, the majority (and sometimes the great majority) of respondents gave fair or poor ratings to the university on campus climate, working conditions, and equity for women, LGBTQ+, and BIPOC faculty. Over half reported that campus climate and working conditions had gotten worse for women and BIPOC faculty. Over half of the respondents reported that they were planning on or considering leaving UVM. The vast majority of respondents reported large negative effects of recent university decisions and problems with university transparency, respect for faculty voice, workload, and work-life balance. The ratings were better on respondents' sense of financial security.

Current campus climate and working conditions:

Evaluations of current campus climate and working conditions were very troubling. When asked to rate UVM's performance on a 5-point scale ranging from poor to excellent (with good as the middle category), respondents overwhelmingly rated the climate for BIPOC faculty as either fair or poor (89%). Roughly two-thirds (65%) said the same for women faculty, while just under half (48%) said the same for LGBTQ+ faculty. In terms of faculty rank, 83% of respondents rated UVM's climate as fair or poor for untenured and non-tenure track faculty (NTT), and 53% said the same for tenured faculty.

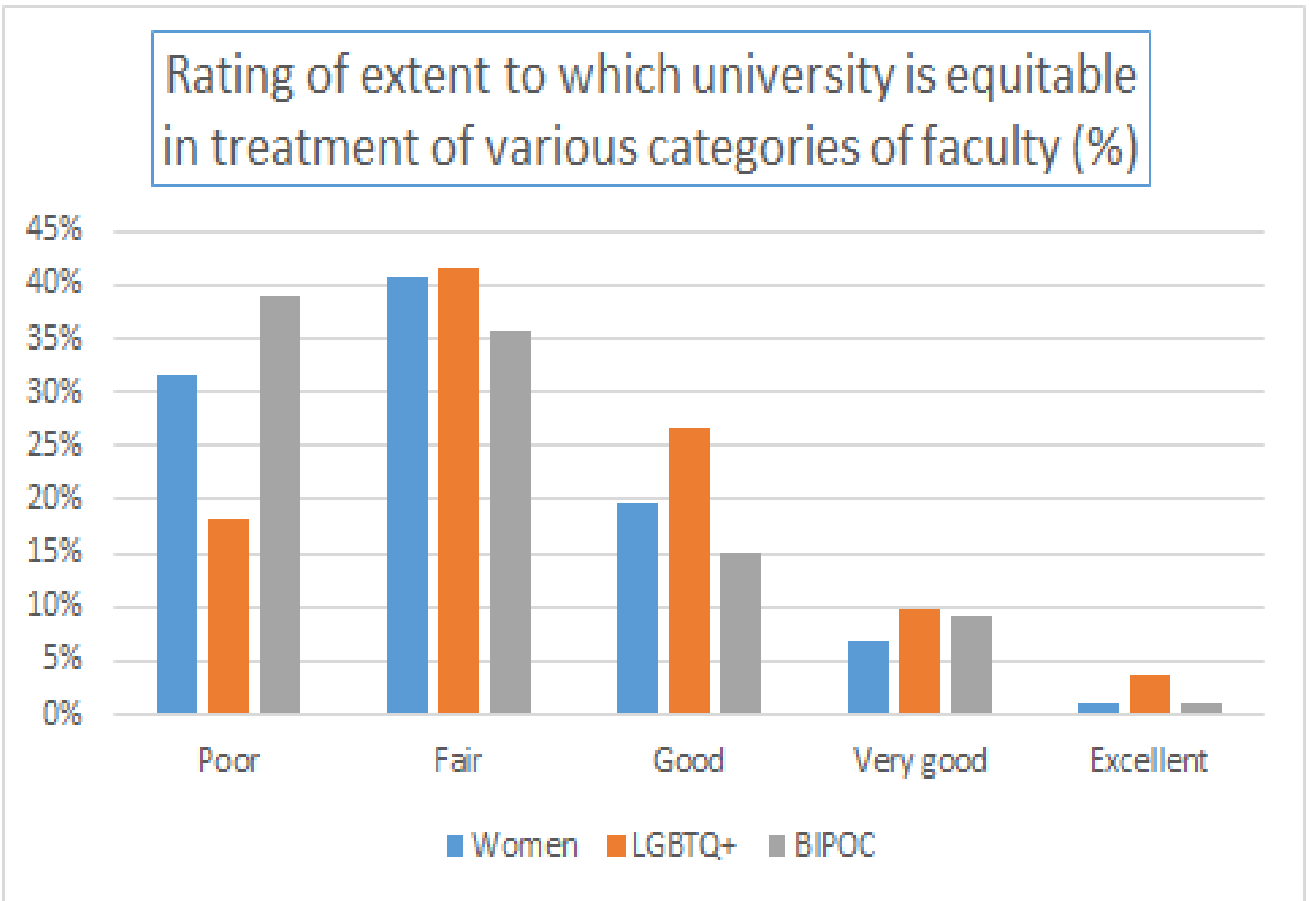
Change in campus climate and working conditions:

Many respondents reported that the campus climate had worsened over the last two years, most notably so for women faculty and untenured and NTT faculty. Regarding climate and conditions for women faculty, 66% said things have gotten worse in the last two years. For BIPOC faculty, 56% said things have gotten worse. For LGBTQ+ faculty, 27% observed a worsening. In dividing by rank, 85% noted a worsening of climate and working conditions for non-tenure track and untenured faculty, compared with 66% for tenured faculty.



Equity:

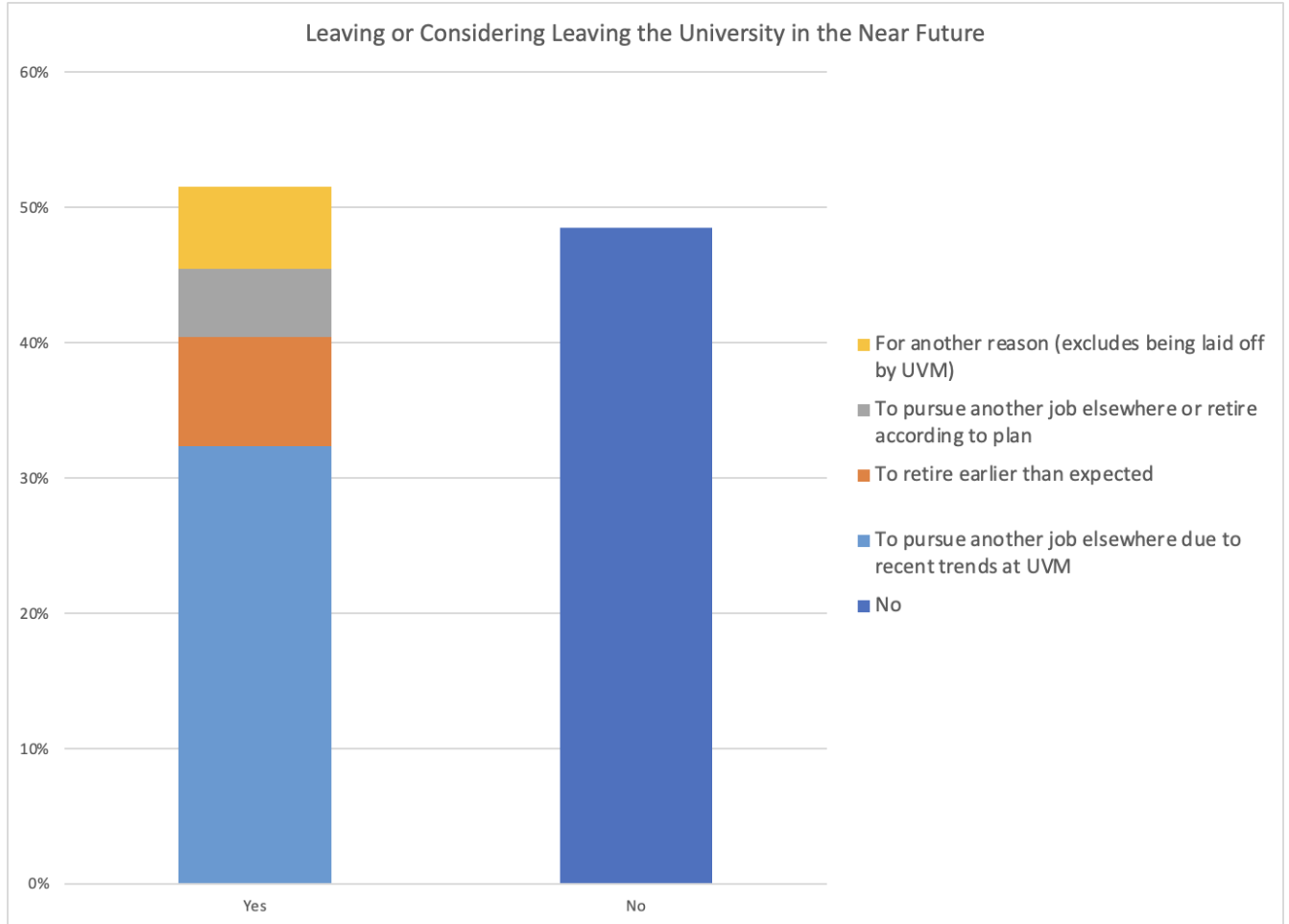
With regard to the issue of equity, the results were also concerning. The question associated equity with things like “compensation, workload, work assignments, working conditions, service expectations, recognition, evaluations, and promotion.” Ratings on perceived equity were somewhat worse in relation to BIPOC and women faculty than for LGBTQ+ faculty. 74% rated UVM as fair or poor in equitable treatment of BIPOC faculty and 72% gave UVM a fair or poor rating on equitable treatment of faculty women. 60% of faculty gave a rating of fair or poor regarding equitable treatment of LGBTQ+ faculty.



Leaving UVM:

Alarming, 51% of respondents said that they were either definitely or potentially planning to leave UVM in the near future. Roughly 12% indicated that they were doing so (or contemplating doing so) as part of a planned or early retirement. But a whopping 32% said they were leaving or considering leaving “in order to pursue another job elsewhere due to recent trends at UVM.”

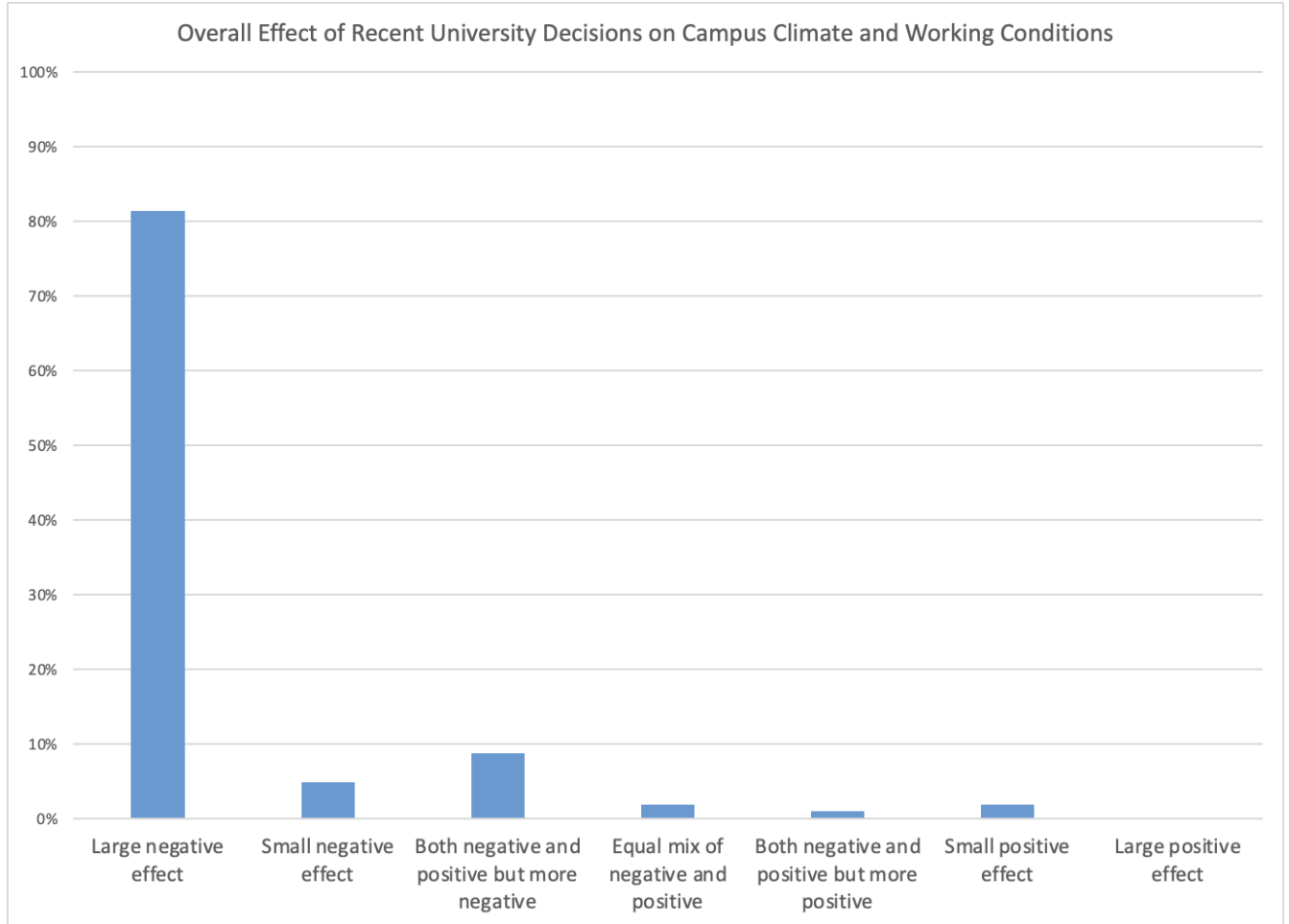
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Effects of recent university decisions:

81% of responses rated recent university administration decisions as having a large negative effect on campus climate and working conditions. Examples of recent university decisions included budgetary decisions, program cuts/mergers, job cuts/hiring freezes, staffing cuts, and restructuring/reorganization plans. Fewer than 3% noted on balance more positive effects.

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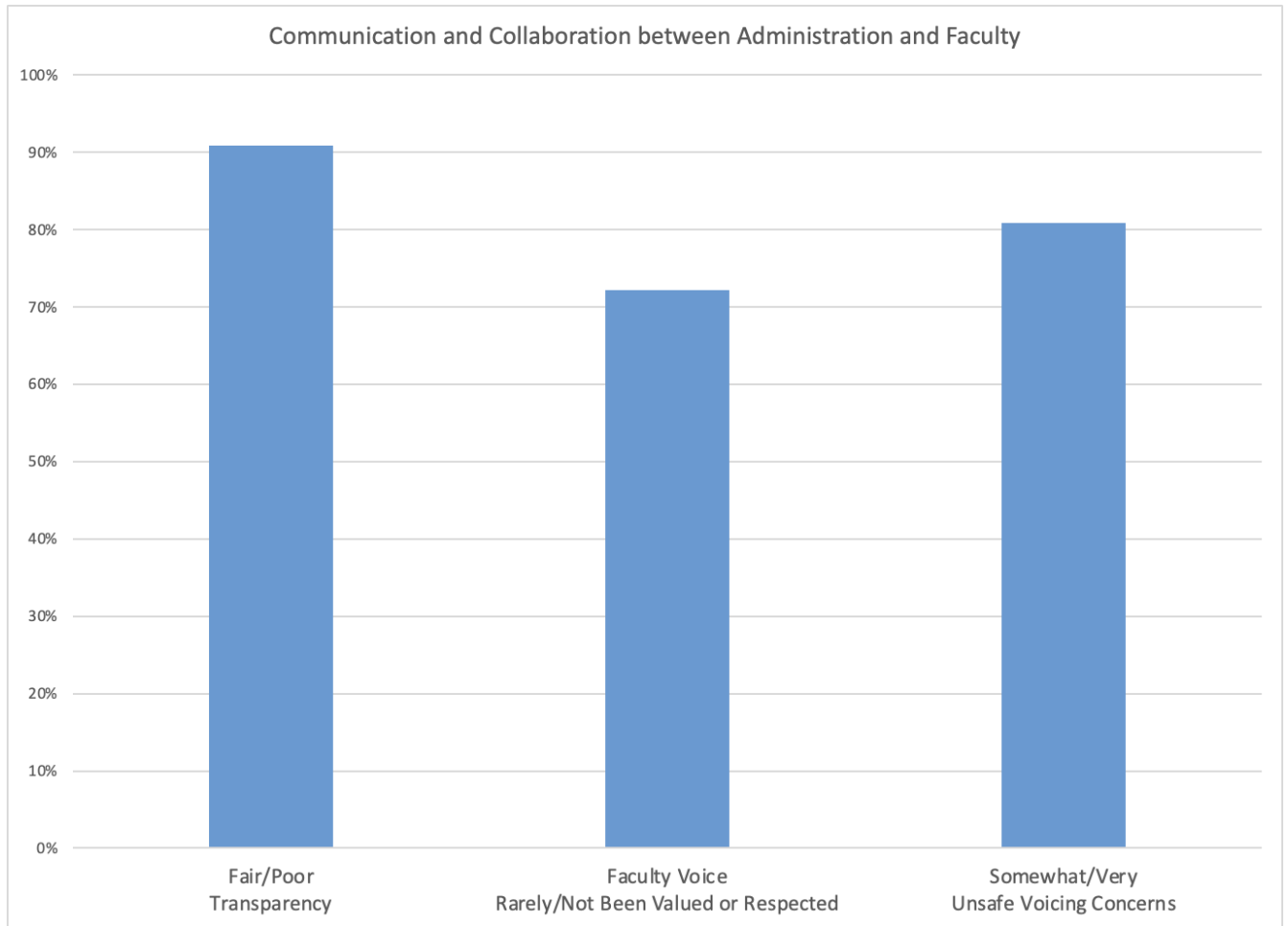
Transparency:

91% of respondents rated the university as fair or poor in its degree of transparency. Transparency was defined as “sharing with faculty key information about important matters under deliberation at the university.”

Faculty voice:

With regard to respect for faculty voice, 72% said that faculty voice has either not been valued or respected or only rarely so in deliberations about future directions for the university over the past couple of years. Over 80% said that they feel somewhat unsafe or very unsafe “voicing their ideas or concerns with regard to current conditions at and/or future directions for the university.”

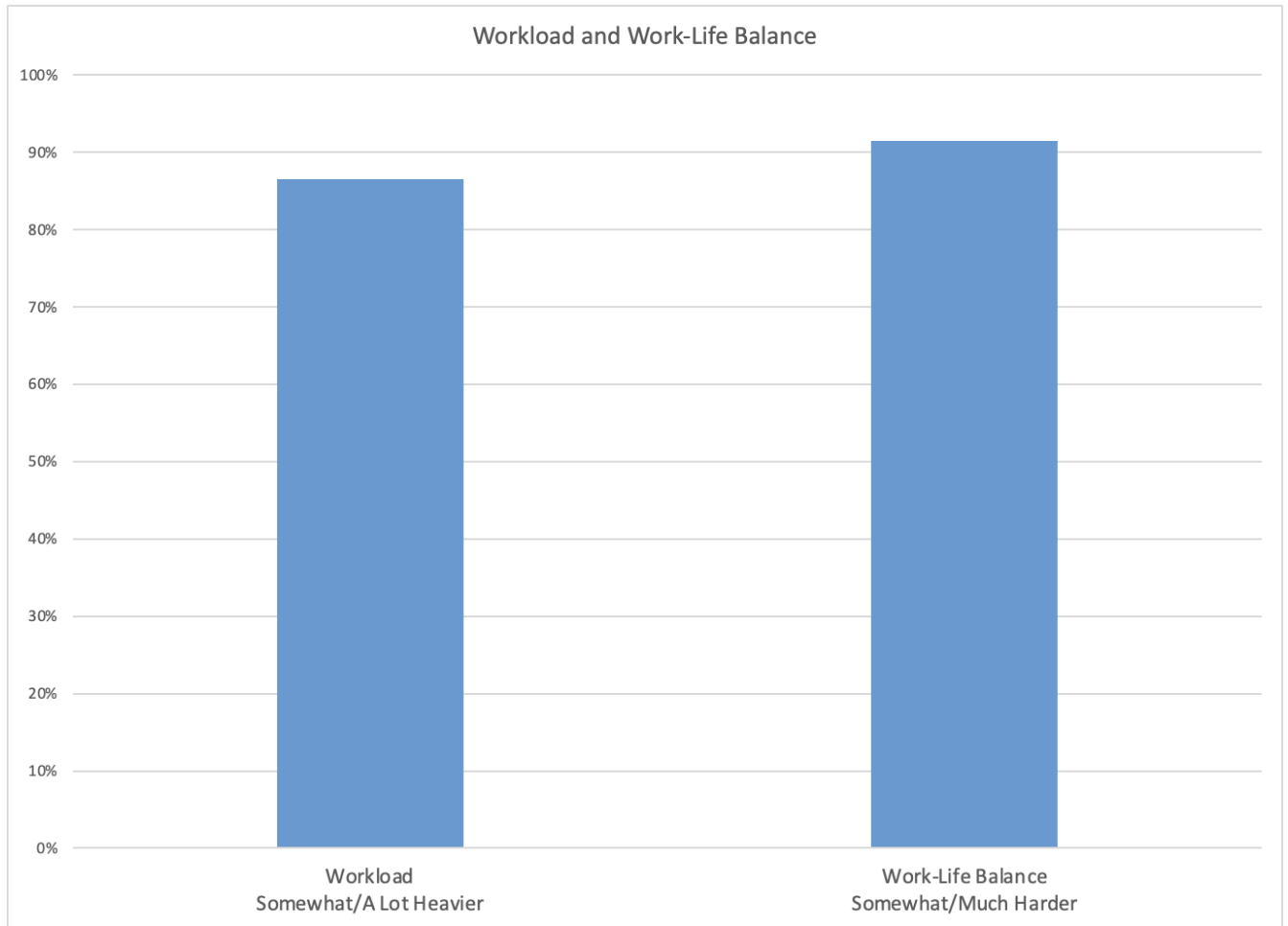
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Workload:

With regard to current workload, over 86% said that it was somewhat or a lot heavier than two years ago. With regard to work-life balance, over 91% stated that it was somewhat or much harder. While some of this is no doubt attributable to the pandemic, in their open-ended comments respondents linked a substantial portion of this increased workload to recent university trends and decisions beyond the pandemic, as will be shown in the qualitative results section.

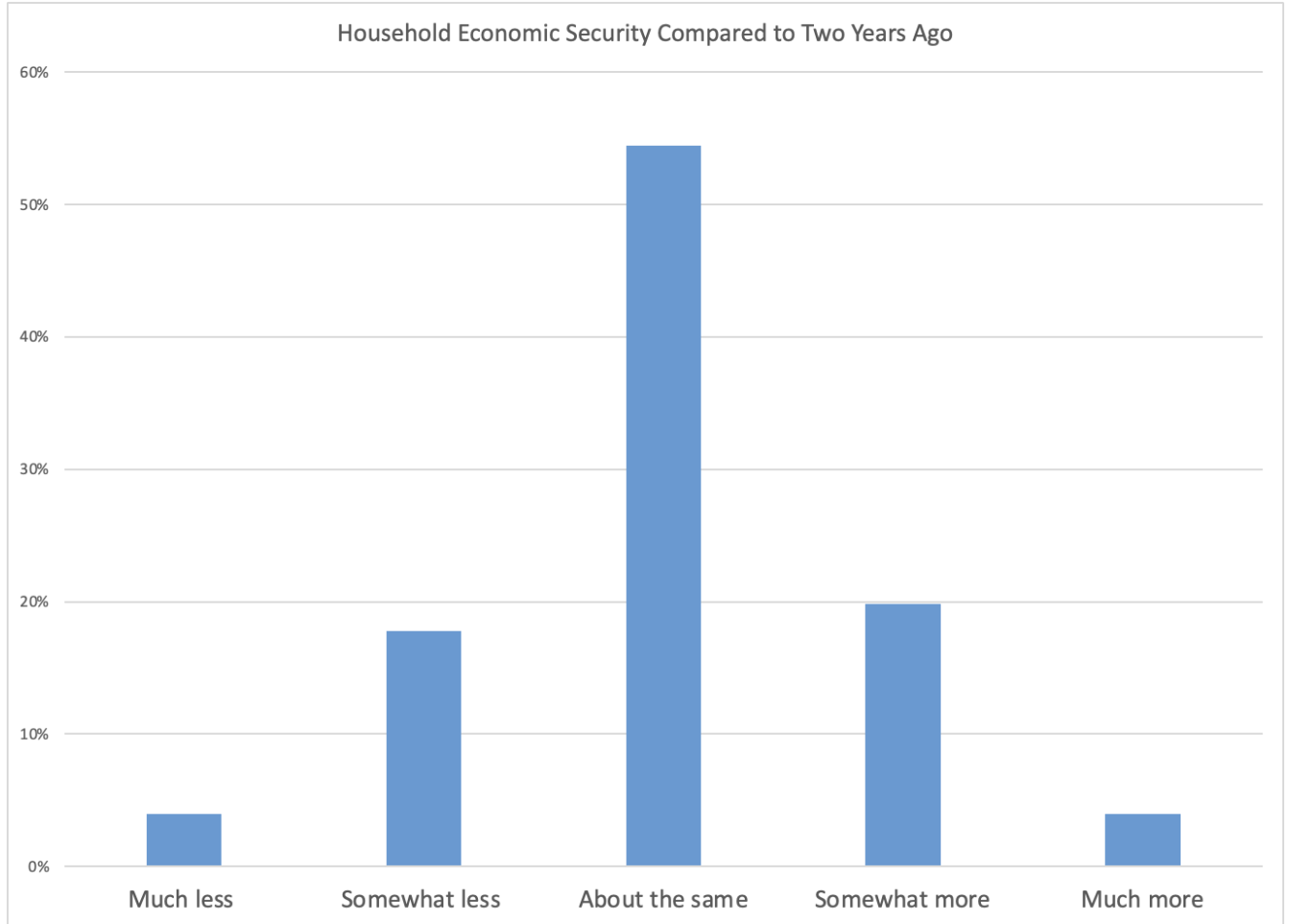
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Financial security:

The pattern of responses for trend in faculty's sense of financial security over time was better than for the other indicators. Here only 21% said that their household was either somewhat or much less financially secure than two years ago. 24% said that their household was more financially secure, and 54% said that their financial security was about the same.

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Key Qualitative Results

The survey garnered over twenty pages of qualitative responses to the open-ended questions posed. Those responses help to contextualize the quantitative results summarized above. Below we note trends in respondent comments and provide some illustrative quotes.

Overall, the open-ended comments demonstrate a strong sense of concern about the way in which the current administration is running the university. Participants wrote of a substantial disconnect between the administration and the faculty and of an “exploitative,” “callous,” and “nontransparent” approach on the part of the administration. Respondents linked faculty contemplating or actively planning an exit strategy with problems with campus climate and working conditions and issues of inequity. In their comments, faculty specifically said that their hard work has only been paid “superficial lip service” but given “no genuine recognition or respect,” despite the fact that their workload has increased to an unprecedented level due to both expanding class sizes and the “onslaught” of the pandemic. Many specifically addressed the continuing disproportionate advising and service load on women, LGBTQ+, and BIPOC faculty and how this load has increased even further during the pandemic. For many respondents, the administration’s “failure to value and treat humanely” the faculty was epitomized by actions such as the shutting down of the UVM children’s

school, the announcement of university restructuring in the midst of a pandemic, and the removal of the Black Lives Matter flag at a time when the country is coping with racist attacks. They pointed out how “the regressive cuts” being made at the university were hitting the most vulnerable faculty the hardest.

Respondents also wrote of being overwhelmed by the additional work needed to adapt their classes for online, remote, and mixed modes of teaching, support students with unprecedented levels of need and fragility, and cope with mental exhaustion as they juggled family care and work responsibilities, as well as health risks to themselves and their families. Faculty expressed frustration about how, at the very time when they were “stretched to the limit” with “little to no time to attend meetings,” the university was moving ahead with plans for restructuring that could have large long-term impacts on faculty work and job security and substantial impacts on the quality of a UVM education. Respondents wrote of their “demoralization” at how the decision to reorganize and to cut departments, programs and majors/minors in CAS and CESS were made “in a unilateral way,” with “little to no real input” from the faculty. Faculty expressed further frustration with how major university decisions have been made with a lack of transparency concerning the reasons and evidence behind those decisions. Respondents wrote of how the administration engendered “deep mistrust” when it claimed “financial necessity” but failed to provide the supporting financial evidence.

Many respondents reported their observation that this administration has “failed to honor” its commitment to shared governance. Participants wrote that expressing dissent with decisions that they felt to be short-sighted and harmful to the future of the university was currently “unsafe” with this university administration due to “fear of reprisals.” They wrote of how freedom of speech, and the right to organize, are both being “threatened by the increasing authoritarian tendencies” of the administration. Respondents also noted how BIPOC, women, LGBTQ+ and NTT faculty “face the highest risks” of exercising their right to freedom of speech and are the first to be silenced in this kind of climate. While pandemic stresses are mentioned, respondents focused on the way in which the administration has failed to lead with “integrity,” “transparency,” and “evidence,” or “respect and compassion” for others. Respondents stated that instead of valuing and respecting faculty experience and knowledge, this administration has ignored its responsibility for true shared governance with its faculty and resorted to empty displays of alleged “participation.” A frequent refrain was “Shame on UVM!”

The results below address main survey topics in the order in which they were presented in the quantitative results. Here, first the overall results for each topic are characterized. Then representative quotes are provided, starting with quotes speaking to the topic in a general sense and then those focusing on the impact on women, LGBTQ+, and BIPOC faculty.

Reasons faculty are leaving UVM:

As noted above, close to a third of the faculty in this sample stated that they were leaving or considering leaving UVM in the near future “to seek a new job elsewhere due to recent university decisions.” An additional 8 faculty are retiring earlier than expected. Below are some comments from the survey that help to contextualize the reasons behind these premature exit plans. Respondents

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emphasized low campus morale, an administration that is not keeping true to the university's mission, and poor treatment of women and BIPOC faculty.

In general:

"The assault on faculty governance is relentless. I am actively looking to leave UVM and I know that others are, too."

"I will be looking for jobs elsewhere next fall, because I know it's been better elsewhere."

"I don't like working at a place where neither the president, the provost, nor my dean seem to care about academics and excellence. They care about numbers, that's all."

"I have decided to retire and leave the university years in advance of what I had planned. Other faculty are leaving, or looking to leave, for other jobs."

"There is a level of campus tension that is unparalleled in the 20 something years I have been here. We are losing key campus scholars, valued colleagues and the esprit de corps that makes the flagship of the little-state-that-could work. This is so sad."

"I don't think I can continue to be as productive in my scholarship as I used to be under these conditions. But frankly I don't think the university cares about my scholarly work, anyway. It isn't fun to work here anymore."

"I feel as if the people at the top are trying to destroy the teaching mission of this university."

"Many of us are seriously concerned about the future of this institution and have no faith in executive leadership. I have witnessed a mass exodus of good people and fear more will follow to the point that I will have no choice but to leave."

"The current push for UVM reorganization is scary - this could potentially lead to a significant egress and loss of LCOM Faculty from UVM."

In relation to women, LGBTQ+, and BIPOC faculty:

"The Garimella administration has made matters worse by its hostility to women faculty —for example, by closing the Children's School and by trying to intimidate its female critics. Look at all the female and BIPOC faculty and staff retiring or leaving for other jobs."

"We continue to be unable to retain BIPOC faculty because the UVM administration has shown a total lack of real commitment to diversity and inclusion."

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“In my observation, the BIPOC colleagues in my department have been driven out over the last 20 years because they felt called on to work harder than their white colleagues, and they felt alienated by UVM and Vermont at large.”

“The Garimella administration has made matters worse by its hostility to BIPOC students and faculty—for example, around the BLM flag.”

“The Garimella administration seems to have made things worse and that trickles down to the departmental level. It seems that UVM claims to want ‘diversity,’ but only if those who are considered ‘diverse’ act in white ways...when we show up as authentically ourselves we are subject to constant microaggressions from students and coworkers and administrators, and to gaslighting and oppressive working conditions. To put it bluntly, UVM feels like a shit show at all levels and I am actively looking elsewhere as I do not see things getting better here.”

Campus climate and working conditions:

Respondents noted poor campus climate and working conditions for women, LGBTQ+, and BIPOC faculty. They focused on a sense of demoralization stemming from the actions of the university administration and the Board of Trustees, which they perceived as not prioritizing education, research, or social justice. Respondents observed an extreme increase in demands placed upon faculty at the same time there was a decreasing support afforded to faculty. Here they noted the particular salience of the closure of the children’s school and humanities departments and the removal of the Black Lives Matters flag from the Davis Center as some particularly salient acts reflecting and contributing to the poor climate and working conditions. They observed that although the children’s school had limited capacity, it provided essential childcare services to many faculty, and such services were desperately needed during the pandemic.

In general:

“Morale is lower than ever.”

“Morale is plummeting, and the communications from the administration seem not to be able to acknowledge that real people on campus are suffering.”

“Based on my interactions with other faculty members, I would best describe the mood on campus as isolated and discouraged, with a lot of underlying anger.”

“This is not a supportive environment. In addition, I am constantly being asked to do more for less.”

“I have never felt as demoralized as I have in recent years, and particularly in the past year, at UVM. I don’t even have the energy to articulate all the ways in which the University administration and the BOT are destroying the University and the morale of faculty, staff, and

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students. In a period where they have continuously implored us to be kind to students, they have simultaneously exploited and abused us. It's honestly sickening."

"UVM treats its faculty, especially women, LGBTQ+, and BIPOC faculty like disposable cogs and folks to be touted exploited to the hilt and then thrown away. This is not the way to run a university and entirely out of line with Our Common Ground. We are a state university that is supposed to be dedicated to social justice. Shame on UVM!"

"The Sullivan administration buried the results of the campus-wide Climate Survey from 2 years ago by refusing to write a summary report—clearly it was pretty damning. Garimella came in and instead of reversing this action or taking up the largely ignored demands of the BIPOC students, proceeded to further alienate and suppress faculty concerned with gender equity and social justice. We have to correct this or the university will sustain damage that will take a generation to heal."

"The level of disrespect and disdain that the administration has communicated to the faculty has been dumbfounding. It has caused a huge distraction from the real work at the heart of the university: teaching, advising, scholarship, and service. The level of arrogance exhibited by upper administration is nothing short of astounding. The faculty, staff, students, and alumni have a great wealth of knowledge about this university and what it stands for and what it can and cannot do. The hubris of disregarding that knowledge by an administration that claims to be 'scientific' is shameful. It is time for some humility on the part of an administration that is failing in an epic manner. They should not use us as a stepping-stone to their next gig, leaving a huge mess in their wake. They should not blame faculty, staff, and students for the economic struggles of the university to be as profitable as they desire. They should stop doing outside consulting and do their job to raise money for the university."

"The cuts to programs, Garimella's salary, raises for a basketball coach, the bizarre resistance to flying a BLM flag, and these ridiculous policies to open in person during a pandemic have made working here unbearable. The degrading emails from the provost and reorganizing during a f---ing pandemic! I just can't!"

"The administration treats faculty like any capitalist treats workers. We are useful so long as we're compliant, but largely they treat us as adversaries."

In relation to women, LGBTQ+, and BIPOC faculty:

"The current climate at UVM is nothing less than an emergency for women and BIPOC faculty."

"The closure of the UVM Childcare Center is exhibit A of the climate at UVM and how women are perceived and treated."

"This year has been especially challenging for women in the workplace. UVM has done nothing to alleviate that challenge or even acknowledge it, and in fact they have made it worse by the closure of the Campus Children's School."

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“The recent decision to close the campus children's center has shut down the possibility of helping pre-tenure women.”

“The closing of the Campus Children's School, with performative and ineffective research in response to the backlash that ensued, is not only demoralizing but has potential to impact recruitment and retention of faculty, and has had a disproportionate impact on women faculty. Again, this is at a time when stress, especially around childcare is extremely high, when these actions have done more harm than if taken at any other time.”

“It is exhausting to work on a campus where sexual harassment and harassment of LGBT faculty just seems to be mostly fine. There are no consequences for bad behavior among tenured faculty on this campus.”

“I am worried about how frequently BIPOC faculty leave UVM. Retention has to be a concern not just when it comes to students but also faculty. I think when BIPOC faculty leave it is a sign that the climate is not good here for faculty of color.”

“As faculty face more and more precarious working conditions created by the University BOT and administration, women, LGBTQ+, and BIPOC faculty are being disproportionately impacted, particularly in Colleges that are currently under attack. This is negatively impacting current faculty and will certainly impact any faculty that are hired in the current environment.”

“This administration's ostensive inclusiveness is not much more than propaganda. You cannot support the intellectual climate that creates space for BIPOC faculty and students by eroding humanities, and without new hires that will expand disciplinary and interdisciplinary scholarship and education.”

“UVM’s administration and the board of Trustees engage in performative allyship without any fundamental substance. From the removal of the BLM flag to the abuse and exploitation of NTT faculty, to the departure of Wanda Heading Grant this administration is morally bankrupt.”

“The administration's unilateral decision to remove the Black Lives Matter flag is quite hurtful for BIPOC members of our university community. I have also heard BIPOC colleagues speak of negative experiences with the new president.”

“Humanities employs the largest number of BIPOC faculty at UVM, and is responsible for creating inclusive culture through its pedagogical and intellectual work. This administration’s direct attack on humanities creates the climate where BIPOC faculty are made feel intimidated and unsafe.”

Equity:

Respondents made many comments about inequalities and inequities at the university for women, LGBTQ+, and BIPOC faculty in terms of allocation of compensation, funding, resources, recognition,

and promotion. Faculty in these groups, respondents observed, are pressed to do more work, especially in service, advising, and administrative tasks (unequal treatment), and they are not given any consideration for the greater burdens they bear (inequitable treatment). Respondents noted that for a university that aspires to social justice, this failure to attend to equality and equity among the faculty workload was striking and “shameful.”

“There are many stories of women and BIPOC faculty here being less recognized for their achievements, given less allocation of funding or resources, and of white men being given credit for work others did.”

“Disparities in compensation persist particularly for Black women faculty and administrators.”

“Women faculty, LGBTQ+, and BIPOC faculty have always done more mentoring, more administrative tasks and more unpaid work. There is little effort to move away from that system.”

“Women continue to do twice as much service and advising because we pick up where male colleagues refuse to do their share, often because we feel a commitment to students.”

“LGBTQ+ and BIPOC faculty are often over-burdened with service as 'representative' tokens on committees.”

“Heavy service duty is often left to or assumed by women and LGBTQ+ faculty, if nothing else, to ensure a better working environment.”

“Many of the BIPOC faculty that I know have higher service workloads than white faculty members. With limited senior BIPOC leadership, a lot of the building awareness, racial equity awareness, and justice work seems to fall on the same people. While I think that it is important to advance these issues personally, I have to note with some bitterness that once again, BIPOC people have to work harder at every stage of career advancement.”

“The administration takes a legalistic approach to equity: they seem to want to avoid potential lawsuits and negative image. But when it comes to substance they do not put resources into creating equitable conditions. The 'bias report' system is woefully inadequate to addressing the needs of students, faculty and staff.”

Negative effects of recent university decisions:

Respondents frequently referred to the negative effects of recent university decisions on morale, campus climate, and working conditions. They wrote of the negative effects of a number of administrative decisions. These included the university’s continuing hiring freeze on faculty and staff positions; the recent cuts to faculty positions, departments, and programs; the administration persisting in making regressive bargaining offers for most of the pandemic period; and the administration launching a reorganization process when faculty were overwhelmed with

unprecedented increases in their tasks and responsibilities both at home and at work. Many wrote of the disdain for faculty reflected in such decisions. There was a widespread sense that the administration was taking advantage of the pandemic to push through aggressive austerity measures and erode the rich liberal arts curriculum while faculty energies were occupied addressing the pandemic conditions. Faculty pointed to the combination of cuts and restructuring pushed through in a pandemic without clear justification as the main source of their mistrust. There were also concerns about how the administration seemed out of touch with how hard it was to care for and/or homeschool one's children while teaching and doing research and university service from home. The closing down of the campus children's school and its detrimental effects on women and low-income faculty was a continuing theme. Some respondents worried about how UVM was not clear about the accommodations provided by pandemic tenure clock stoppages and pointed out the "cruelty" of telling faculty that pandemic clock stoppages canceled out parental leave. Participants pointed out how closing humanities departments disproportionately affects women and BIPOC faculty. Those respondents reasoned that not only do women and BIPOC faculty disproportionately teach in those fields, but humanities faculty also teach a large proportion of diversity courses (D1 and D2) that help to improve the climate at UVM. Many respondents expressed concern that the actions of the administration would threaten the university with not just short-term disruption, but with long-lasting harm.

In general:

"Terror, misery, and listlessness are words that colleagues use to describe the climate since the publicly announced cuts last December."

"The reorganization timing is awful - potentially leaving important voices out of the conversation who are too busy with caregiving, illness, or just the workload increase to participate as fully as they might want to."

"I would like to see a medical professional weigh in on the impact to mental health on making sweeping budgetary and programmatic changes during the COVID crisis when students and faculty are already stressed and anxious."

"The long-running defunding of academics for most campus units plus the 5+-year hiring freeze in CAS combined with the pandemic pedagogy and research challenges and the administration's attempt to use the Covid crisis as an opportunity to further squeeze faculty, make NTT faculty more precarious, and push restructuring = a bad situation for workloads, careers, and morale made dire."

"The university is taking advantage of the pandemic stress to create changes that do not benefit staff and faculty. We have to go along with it to keep our jobs."

"There is a seeming deliberate attempt or at least willingness to make people feel insecure in their jobs and devalued. And for all the smiling gratitude expressed about how hard faculty worked to make it a successful year in the pandemic, that rings hollow in the face of disdain

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for faculty shown in recent university decisions. And university/administration's positions in faculty contract negotiations are demeaning. Maybe that's a negotiating strategy, but even so, it illustrates callous disrespect."

"The speed at which changes such as merging departments into a school (and in the process quietly dissolving our department) is inexplicable and leaves us with little information and no confidence in the process. We posed questions to the committee working on this merger and have heard no response. It is not even clear to us that there is a problem or that its solution lies in merging departments into a school."

"The university NEEDS to delay these conversations about restructuring until all of us have more cognitive bandwidth to participate from a place of genuine collaboration and collegiality. Failure to delay these conversations is tantamount to using the pandemic as flimsy cover to push forward draconian budgetary decisions that will do permanent harm to UVM as an institution."

Effects on women, LGBTQ+, and BIPOC faculty:

"For women, the bulk of child-rearing falls on them, so in order to be fair and equitable, there needs to be reliable, safe, accessible child care for UVM employees."

"The lack of support for parents during the pandemic has been a huge problem. The University needs to take a stronger role in helping parents secure childcare. It also needs to be MUCH more clear about how the pandemic will affect tenure and promotion criteria for parents of young children. I took the option of adding a year to my tenure clock, but the promises of accommodation for the pandemic-related productivity losses were extremely vague and I have little faith that they will be properly accounted for in tenure and promotion evaluations."

"I was floored to find out that the Covid-19 tenure clock extension granted to 'all pre-tenure faculty members' ended up NOT including anyone who gave birth/took a semester of parental leave at some point in AY 2020-2021. In other words, the most vulnerable in that group did not get both a Covid extension and a parental leave extension. This is sexist and undermines the support both of those extensions were to grant separately...."

"I swear to G-d I don't think anyone in the admin suite has met human children. Faculty with caregiving duties were almost NEVER mentioned in the past year, despite our receiving TONS of correspondence from leadership. And now, we are told we will be back in person full time in the fall, when children won't be vaccinated. I feel downright GASLIT!! ... How will I teach in person full time in the fall with my child not vaccinated and with no back up care?? I just can't with this place. I'm so upset. I won't forgive them anytime soon, and in fact I will be looking for jobs elsewhere next fall because I know it's been better elsewhere."

"The other truly shameful thing was the closing of the children's school on campus. ... How can the administration claim to be committed to equity, diversity, inclusion and justice with their

words, and take resources and opportunities away from poor and BIPOC kids with their actions? For shame, UVM.”

“The proposed shut down of the Romance language majors will negatively affect more BIPOC faculty.”

Lack of transparency:

There was widespread concern about lack of transparency on the part of the university administration and the Board of Trustees. Respondents observed a lack of timeliness and transparency with budgetary data, financial data, problem definition, parameters for solutions, and campus Covid counts. This lack of transparency, respondents noted, was out of keeping with UVM’s status as a public state university. They noted that faculty efforts to get financial information have shown that the administration has not been forthright and consistent in its presentation of UVM’s financial situation.

In general:

“There is zero transparency.”

“The administration has not even been able to clearly articulate the problem they are trying to solve, let alone the parameters for solutions or how the imposed “solutions” align with the ‘problem’.”

“There has been poor transparency in not releasing in a full and timely manner budget and financial audit information for the university and the Foundation which should be public in a public state university.”

“The current restructuring initiative has placed a great burden on faculty having to inform themselves of the institution's financial situation due to misinformation and disinformation and lack of transparency.”

“Central administration has lied about the financial health of the university, manufacturing a 'budget deficit' in CAS.”

“The financial situation of the University, especially the IBB model, is very non-transparent. How subvention is being distributed or how decisions concerning subvention are being made is a mystery.”

“The Board of Trustees is very inaccessible and much of BOT meetings are held behind closed doors. They need to have faculty, staff, students, and alumni in large numbers on the BOT.”

“The administration has also not been timely in releasing Covid case numbers, leaving large gaps in time between releases of information, thus putting the community at risk.”

“The administration has been paying far more attention to spin and PR than to evidence, data, integrity, and responsibility to the university community.”

Lack of respect and protection for faculty voice:

Many respondents expressed concern about what they described as this administration’s lack of respect for, and failure to value and protect, faculty voice. They observed that a small group of executives seems to make most decisions without engaging true faculty governance over matters under their purview. Respondents spoke of administrative nods to faculty participation in decision-making as largely performative. Faculty wrote about feeling unsafe and living in fear of reprisals from the administration. Respondents pointed out how this culture of fear was especially detrimental to women, LGBTQ+, BIPOC, and untenured faculty. Although tenured faculty felt somewhat safer, both tenured and untenured/ non-tenure-track faculty wrote of feeling unsafe at a level that they had not experienced before President Garimella came to UVM.

In general:

“I feel respected and safe at my department level, but not beyond that. I feel my job is at risk and it makes me hesitant to speak up unless I feel there is a critical point that no one else will make if I don't.”

“The President and the Provost seem to have forgotten that shared governance is the heartblood of a robust academic community. This lapse has resulted in a level of campus tension that is unparalleled in the 20 something years I have been here.”

“‘Shared governance’ is largely symbolic--the important decisions are made without consultation or meaningful input.”

“Invitations for faculty input are an afterthought and it creates the appearance – if it isn’t in fact the reality – that we are being presented with false choices.”

“As a tenured white [faculty member] I am scared – I can’t imagine how people with less power and privilege feel. This administration has done it’s best to demoralize and disenfranchise faculty.”

“The combination of factors creates the distinct impression that the UVM faculty are not valued and their work and dedication are not respected.”

“The level of disrespect and disdain that the administration has communicated to the faculty has been dumbfounding.”

“I have tenure, and what is more, I'd rather lose my job than not say what my considered opinion is, but it is clear to me that there are many people, even with tenure, who do not feel they can safely discuss many things openly.”

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“The current administration seems to have little respect for all faculty but particularly little respect for the most vulnerable among us.”

“Very, very disappointing. I feel like faculty voice has had zero impact, so I feel entirely disconnected from all decisions. I have tried to express my opinion and it makes no difference.”

“...it is hard to embrace this process [of reorganization] because it is hard to trust the stated motives for reorganization and even harder to trust that the well-being of the faculty and staff will be given sufficient consideration. This combination of factors creates the distinct impression that the UVM faculty are not valued and their work and dedication are not respected.”

“The Garimella administration has shown it has no idea what UVM is and stands for and no respect for it, or us.

“I feel like the current administration is not committed to seriously engaging with faculty-- despite telling reorg committees to hold fora. The decisions or attempts to act are driven by a narrow view of the university and are asserted in authoritarian ways.”

“As an untenured faculty member, I don't want to speak up ever in opposition.”

“Non represented staff and NTT faculty in particular have expressed real fear about speaking up as they fear recriminations. Even TT faculty faced reprisals for exercising their protected academic freedoms.”

“Thank you for giving me the space to express my profound disappointment and frustration. I have curbed my critique in public fora because I fear for my future here as a contingent faculty member.”

In relation to women, LGBTQ+, and BIPOC faculty:

“Under this administration UVM primarily operates on the basis of decision-making by a few elites behind closed doors with lip service to faculty participation. In this kind of environment, women, LGBTQ+, BIPOC, and first-generation faculty members are at a severe disadvantage in terms of compensation, workload, work assignments, promotion, status, and recognition.”

“For the past couple of years, faculty have gotten the sense from upper administration that they have to be careful of what they say or they might find themselves the target of vindictive action such as cutting or hobbling their department, program, or job. This has especially been the case for several women faculty who have been tone policed by administrators when they have expressed reasonable disagreement with administrator's statements or actions during or outside of meetings.”

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“The increased job insecurity I feel as NTT faculty means I am less willing to speak out about microaggressions or situations that make me uncomfortable.”

Workload:

The qualitative responses showed that although some of the increase in workload was related to the pandemic, many faculty felt that it was also related to increasing demands placed on faculty over and above the pandemic. The continuing hiring freeze on faculty and staff positions and non-replacement of faculty attrition and retirements was seen as the main factor in these increasing work demands. Participants observed how the increasing workload at UVM has hit women, LGBTQ+, BIPOC, and non-tenure-track faculty especially hard. Respondents noted how the national political climate and the pandemic have exacerbated existing inequities as women, LGBTQ+ people, BIPOC, and lower income people have “borne additional home-based caring work, disproportionate pandemic and mental health challenges in their communities, and untenable demands on what were already delicate balances of work/life.”

In general:

“Decreased support and funding for teaching, faculty, means fewer faculty to do more work.”

“Positions not filled create service and teaching burden.”

“Hiring freezes have meant a shrinking pool of faculty but no reduction in the work needing to be done to teach and sustain programs for students at a time when university finances are sound and yet the administration refuses to invest in programs.”

“We are down full-time faculty positions which leaves the rest of us doing more to cover all the service responsibilities while scrambling to find ways to deliver the curriculum.”

“We are now doing twice as much work as we had to do back when we had an adequate number of faculty, especially when it comes to service.”

“I am doing a lot more informal 'counseling' to gently herd everyone to the finish line of the end of semester. I am glad to be a voice of compassion and support but it's brutally draining.”

“Of course workload will get heavier if faculty keep leaving or retiring, and are not replaced. It isn't a secret formula. ... The other HUGE problem for us is that we lost our administrative assistant and they were never replaced, so on top of picking up the slack for lost colleagues we now have to do all the administrative work ourselves ... This has caused a lot of extra stress for all of us faculty in my department, as well as for students, who are the victims of our inexperienced guidance as we learn to be clerical workers on the job (on top of our actual job).”

In relation to women, LGTBQ+, and BIPOC faculty:

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“The job has become too big for anyone. Insensitive comments from admins make it seem like they think we all have stay at home wives, with dinner and bathed and homeworked children waiting for us when we get home.”

“I am speaking as a female faculty member. As has been documented in national studies, UVM does not recognize the emotional labor that so many of us do. The constant push to increase caps on classes and the devaluation of our teaching and relationships with students is a form of discrimination. The emotional labor that helps retain so many of our students--especially BIPOC and LGBTQ+ students--is not recognized, in fact, it is now being penalized through higher workloads. Some male faculty do this emotional labor as well. This relationship-building work of meeting individually with students (or just responding to their emails) is essential to recruitment and retention. This should be measured and protected.”

“There is a lot of pressure on BIPOC faculty to be the public face of diversity at UVM and serve disproportionately on committees and commissions.”

In relation to NTT faculty:

“My class sizes have all increased, both officially and unofficially. Officially, the caps have been raised in all my classes. Unofficially, even with increased caps, I have been pressured to over-enroll more students because of class and faculty shortages. ... This is all on top of the generally higher workload due to modality shifts during the pandemic, and the mental toll of handling more students while the administration claims that numbers are dropping and uses that as an excuse to fire...oh, I mean ‘nonrenew’ lecturers, and cut programs.”

“I think the campus climate has been broadly pretty bleak for everyone, especially in light of the current pandemic. Faculty were asked to go above and beyond their usual responsibilities, and the message seemed to be that it was up to us to stop students from deferring or transferring, though many factors were out of our control. However, it seemed that these efforts were minimally recognized or appreciated. This has been particularly hard for lecturers, who could not reallocate a 100% teaching appointment and who were most affected by an increase in workloads. This was also particularly hard for women and parents, who were more likely to have major disruptions to their support systems and external demands on their time.”

Financial security:

Some respondents made comments regarding a decline in their sense of financial security. They pointed to the administration’s action of reducing NTT faculty to .75 FTE as a reason for their fears. Participants also expressed worry that the administration would cut more faculty jobs. Although they viewed the risk of job cuts as most salient for non-tenure-track faculty, some worried that tenured faculty may also be at risk given restructuring. Some of the lecturers pointed out how their UVM salary makes it difficult for them to make ends meet.

“Lecturers are worried about their jobs.”

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“A large number of people fear for their job security and have no confidence that the higher level administration is working to protect them... That tenured faculty even have reason to fear for their jobs or departments is remarkable, but the impact is arguably greatest on non-TT faculty and staff.”

“Women make up a greater proportion of NTT faculty, who are still reeling first from many having their FTE cut back to .75 before being restored and now from non-reappointment of 3 NTT faculty in CAS who had a long employment history and were productive and had strong department support.”

“I also took on an extra job when my position was cut by 25% and ended up keeping that position since my workload wasn't reinstated until the last minute.”

“My current daycare costs me 20% of my AY salary.”

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

By design we did not circulate this survey to all women, LGBTQ+, or BIPOC faculty at UVM. The survey captured about half of FWC's 134 members. The results cannot represent the views or experiences of all UVM faculty or all women, LGBTQ+, or BIPOC faculty at UVM. Followup research would be helpful to capture a broader sample of all UVM faculty in these categories with regard to these issues at a future point in time.

Recommendations

Given the results of this survey, the university needs to change course to correct for recent trends that are driving many faculty to seek work elsewhere. Such trends of concern include recent budgetary decisions on the part of the administration and the resulting program cuts/mergers, job cuts, hiring freezes, and staffing cuts. Such trends also include the administration's rushed pursuit of restructuring/reorganization plans without meaningful faculty input on the necessity, wisdom, timing, and nature of such plans. These decisions have had a large negative impact on morale at a time when faculty are exhausted from the all-out effort they exerted to support the university during the pandemic. In order to engage faculty in meaningful discussions about budgetary priorities and structural reform, the University administration needs to reinvest in the faculty and recommit to shared governance, inclusive leadership, and institutional transparency. Specifically, the Faculty Women's Caucus makes the following recommendations:

- **Investment in improving campus climate and working conditions** for women, LGBTQ+, and BIPOC faculty. This should be immediate, concerted, long-term, and it applies to both tenured faculty and untenured or non-tenure-track faculty;
- **Measurably improved equity** for women, LGBTQ+, and BIPOC faculty. This means moving toward more equity in hiring, compensation, workload, work assignments, working conditions, service expectations, recognition, evaluations, and promotion. It requires a public review of faculty hiring, compensation,

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workload, and promotion along the lines of gender, LGBTQ+, and BIPOC identification, together with concerted work to correct inequities;

- **A campus childcare facility** for faculty and staff that will not just replace but go beyond the care that the disbanded children's school was able to offer. The facility would also serve as a source of jobs and training for students, and it can provide childcare to students with children;
- **An automatic one-year extension of the tenure clock** of all pre-tenure faculty in relation to the pandemic distinct from and additional to any parental leave owed to such faculty;
- **Remote accommodation** of faculty who need to continue to work at home if their children or other household members under their care are not yet fully vaccinated;
- **Improved financial transparency** concerning university budgetary and financial audit information. As we are a public state university, such information must be shared with the faculty and the public in a complete, clear, and timely manner.
- **Improved institutional transparency** and sharing of key information with the faculty about important matters under deliberation at the university. Such information should be provided by the administration in an open, proactive, and timely fashion before decisions are made. The Board of Trustees likewise needs to be more transparent in its meetings and deliberations by opening more proceedings to the public and providing more thorough notes on their meetings;
- **Alteration of the Board of Trustees' membership to include faculty and staff**, including those who are women, LGBTQ+, and BIPOC. Improvement in the overall representation on the BOT of women and minorities;
- **Recommitment to shared university governance** with faculty. Faculty have much expertise and experience in matters concerning the University and its educational and research mission that should be valued and heeded by the administration. The Faculty Senate as a whole should be openly consulted about major university deliberations before such decisions are made or publicized beyond the university;
- **Increased respect for and protection of faculty voice**. The administration needs to correct course so that faculty feel safe voicing their ideas or concerns with regard to current conditions at and/or future directions for the university;
- **Meaningful review and rectification of faculty workload**, which has increased in recent years to a level that is threatening faculty health and work-life balance. The breakneck pace of work during the pandemic must not become the new norm. Workload must return to a more reasonable level;
- **Prioritization of retaining and hiring more staff at the department and program level**, rather than cutting them. The way in which staff responsibilities are being offloaded onto faculty is an extremely inefficient use of resources, and it harms faculty ability to attract grants, do research, publish, teach and provide mentorship at the level needed to attract students, colleagues, accolades, and funds;
- **Stabilization and growth of the faculty's financial security** in order to attract and retain talent and to channel more faculty energy into research, teaching, and service by relieving worries about making

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ends meet. Salary stability and growth should be improved for both tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty;

- **Empowerment of women, LGBTQ+, and BIPOC faculty leaders**, elected by the Faculty Senate and fully recognized and compensated for their labor. Their efforts to collect more baseline data as needed and to recommend concrete action steps should receive the full support of the administration; and,
- **Return of the Black Lives Matter flag** to the Davis Center, to be flown as a matter of course.

The concrete actions outlined above should be taken by the administration with due haste to correct the injustices of the current system.

Conclusion

We are grateful to the many Faculty Women's Caucus members who made this survey and this report possible and to you for taking the care to read this report and take appropriate action. The survey results show that the university is at a crisis point. In order to promote the current and future health of the university, the university needs to make good on our stated commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion and to invest in our faculty and staff on the frontlines of teaching and research activities. Recent trends are threatening our teaching and research mission, our public ivy status and our teacher-scholar model, our aspirations to social justice, and our goals to attract and retain faculty, staff, and students. The university needs to do better. For the present and future health of our institution and our community, we invite the administration to partner with the faculty to put these recommendations into practice.