

## **KEY FINDINGS: *STANDING STILL: THE ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR SURVEY***

### Time to Promotion

- On average, it takes women from 1 to 3.5 years longer than men to attain the rank of professor, depending on the type of institution in which they are employed and regardless of whether they are single, married, or divorced or have children.
- Respondents in private independent institutions report the longest period of time spent at the rank of associate professor for women (9.6 years) and the greatest discrepancy between women and men in length of time before the promotion to professor—9.6 years, compared with 6.1 years for men, a difference of 3.5 years, or 57.4%.

### Professional Activities

- Women on average and across all institutions report that they
  - Spend less time on research and writing (7.7 hours a week) than men do (9.7 hours a week).
  - Spend more time on grading or commenting on student work (7.5 hours a week) than men do (6.0 hours a week).
  - Do not devote significantly more time to service than men do.
- Female associate professors across institution types report that they
  - Devote more time to course preparation (10.9 hours a week) than men do (9.1 hours a week).
  - Devote more time to grading or commenting on student work (7.4 hours a week) than men do (5.8 hours a week).

### Family Status

- Women on average and across all institutions report that they devote 31.6 hours a week to child care; men report 14.2 hours a week. Only 38.1% of respondents, however, report having dependent children at home.
- Despite the increased time reported caring for children, married women with a dependent child living at home achieved promotion in slightly less time (8.2 years) than all married women on average (8.8 years). The same was true for men with dependent children (6.3 years), versus all married men (6.8 years).
- By comparison, single or divorced women without dependent children report spending 7.3 years in the associate professor rank; men report 6.0 years. Within the subset of married faculty members with no dependent children, women report the longest time to promotion—9.4 years—while men report 7.0 years.

## Job Satisfaction

- Men report greater job satisfaction than women in almost all cases; women at the rank of both associate professor and professor feel less authority, autonomy, and control over their work lives than men do. Women report very high satisfaction in only one of nine categories: having the authority to make decisions about the content and methods in the courses they teach (85.9% report being “very satisfied”).
- Women who work in Carnegie doctoral institutions report less overall satisfaction in their positions: only 43% say they are “very satisfied,” versus 52% of men. In Carnegie baccalaureate institutions, 43% of both women and men report that they are “very satisfied” with their position.
- Some evidence suggests that job satisfaction for both women and men is higher among those who are older and those who have been in the profession longer.
  - Overall, 64% of those sixty-one or older report that they are “very satisfied” with their jobs, as compared with about 40% of those sixty and under; 57% of women and 69% of men sixty-one and older say they are “very satisfied.”
  - Of those respondents who became associate professors before 1990, 53% say they are “very satisfied” with their job, versus 45% who became associate professors between 1990 and 1999 and 35% in 2000 and after.
  - The gap by gender is widest for those who became associate professors before 1990: 63% of men versus 40% of women in this group report that they are “very satisfied.” Forty-six percent (46%) of the women and 44% of the men promoted to associate professor between 1990 and 1999 are “very satisfied.” Only 34% of the women and 36% of the men promoted since 2000 say they are “very satisfied.”

## Institutional Values

- Women and men differ in the value they believe is placed on teaching when candidates are evaluated for tenure and promotion: 48.5% of the men in doctoral institutions say teaching was “highly valued,” as compared with 35.2% of the women. In master’s institutions, 80.6% of the men and 77.1% of the women call teaching “highly valued.” In baccalaureate institutions, the percentages of women and men who see teaching as “highly valued” are extraordinarily high: 93.6% of women and 91.7% of men.
- The pattern is reversed for publication, however. In Carnegie master’s institutions 76.9% of women and in Carnegie baccalaureate institutions 69.2% of women report that the publication of a monograph is “highly valued” in their evaluation for tenure and promotion, as compared with 63.3% and 59.1% of men.

## **Recommendations**

Among the report’s key recommendations are the following:

1. Colleges and universities should establish clear guidelines and paths for promotion from associate professor to professor in alignment with their institutional mission. With the MLA Task Force on Evaluating Scholarship for Tenure and Promotion, the committee recommends that colleges and universities adopt a more expansive conception of scholarship, research, and publication; rethink the dominance of the monograph; and consider work produced and disseminated in new media. The committee also recommends public scholarship as an important avenue of research.
2. Colleges and universities should offer substantial increases in salary when a faculty member is promoted from associate professor to professor. At institutions of higher education across the country, the increase in salary at promotion generally offers little incentive to aspire to and strive for promotion.
3. Colleges and universities should create programs for mentoring associate professors. At its best, such mentoring inspires a sense of responsibility across ranks and a sense of intergenerational connection and reciprocity.
4. Colleges and universities should sponsor training and development sessions for their department chairs on key matters:
  - the importance of the ongoing development of associate professors, with an emphasis on long-range planning over a period of at least five years and on encouraging the continued scholarly progress of faculty members at the rank of associate professor from the time they are promoted
  - the assessment of the allocation of responsibilities of faculty members to ensure that they are equitably and appropriately distributed across the ranks of probationary and tenured faculty members
  - the monitoring of how long associate professors have been in rank in relation to the mission of the institution. Nine years might be used as a metric for measuring an institution's progress in promoting associate professors.
5. Colleges and universities should devote specific resources, in addition to leaves for research, to support associate professors' scholarship. They have the obligation not only to require and encourage but also to help underwrite the scholarship of faculty members at all ranks and across the span of their careers. Scholarship is a public good and should be supported.
6. Colleges and universities should establish leadership training explicitly for newly tenured women faculty members in the recognition that promotion to associate professor often entails appointment to leadership positions.

### **Study Methodology**

In March 2006 a target population was identified of 7,652 MLA members at the rank of associate and full professor in a college or university in the fifty states and the District of Columbia. In late spring 2006 the associate professor survey was sent to a random sample of 1,206 members of this universe, stratified to be representative of MLA members at the ranks of associate professor and professor with respect to four characteristics: the proportion of women to men, the proportion of members in English departments to those in other language departments, the Carnegie classification of the institutions in which members currently teach, and the identification of institutions as public or private, religiously affiliated or not religiously affiliated (the "control and affiliation" of the institutions to which MLA members belong). Usable

responses were received from 401 members (220 women and 181 men). Overwhelmingly, the respondents hold doctorates (370, or 98.7%). The response rate was 33.3%; 35.3% of women and 31.8% of men responded. This response rate is comparable with that of other surveys the MLA has conducted.

Providing an important point of reference for the MLA associate professor survey are data from the 2004 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF), a survey of a nationally representative sample of faculty members drawn from postsecondary institutions in the fifty states and the District of Columbia that are Title IV–participating and public or private not-for-profit institutions. Within the group of men who responded to the MLA survey, the ratio of associate professors to professors is very close to the ratio of associate professors to professors within the group of men who responded to the 2004 NSOPF. The same holds true for women. The alignment of these two data sets suggests that the MLA associate professor survey provides reliable information about conditions that are characteristic for women in English and the foreign languages who hold the ranks of associate professor or professor in comparison with conditions that are characteristic for men.

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