The main results of the FFNT 2010 Survey

Introduction

The UT Female Faculty Network dedicates a lot of energy to the professional development of their members as well as raising the awareness of gender related issue at the university. In order to identify the needs for professional training areas as well as to understand the practices and culture of different faculties in terms of promoting women careers, FFFNT developed a survey and barometer test in 2009. We believe that the findings of the survey may be beneficial not only to the FFNT members but also to the larger university community.

The UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology has developed a list of personnel policy instruments that proved to attract and keep more women in academia. The FFNT Board adapted the questionnaire from the UK Resource Centre for Women in order to identify the personnel policy instruments and practices in different faculties at the UT and the perceived importance of these issues by the FFNT members. In addition, the Board added the barometer test questions developed by a professional career trainer Esther Mollema in order to identify the areas for professional development courses to be offered by FFNT.

The survey was sent to all the FFNT members on 21 December 2009 and closed on 30 January 2010. 21% of FFNT members participated in the survey. The two respondents who were not faculty members, where left out of the analysis. Given the response rate we do not aim to generalize the outcomes of the survey to the whole FFNT membership, but treat them as an indication of how career development opportunities and organizational practices at the UT are perceived by some of the FFNT members.

The first group of questions dealt with the incentives for personal development. The second group of questions aimed to understand the career promotion processes at the faculty. The third group of questions dealt with organizational culture. The spread across the different university faculties is more or less evenly divided except for a rather low response from CTW (see Table 1).

Table 1. Respondents by faculty

	MB	GW	CTW	EWI	TNW	Other	Total
respondents	13	11	4	11	8	2	49
Members FFNT	46	48	29	52	49	12	236

Looking at the respondents' profile, the highest response (38%) comes from female academics (assistant, associate and full professors) with permanent contracts (see Table 2).

Table 2. Respondents by position

	Professor	UD/UHD	Postdoc	PhD student	Other	Total
Number	3=38%	23=38%	5=13%	13=13%	5	49
Members FFNT	8	61	38	100	29	236

Major findings

Part 1. Policy related issues

This chapter covers responses to the three questions in the survey related to university structures and policies. As the experience of the UK Resource Centre for Women in the UK has showed these are the three main issues which influence the female academic careers.

- Perceived support for personal and professional development
- Appointment and promotion processes
- Departmental structures and culture

Table 3. Perceived support for personal and professional development

1	Does your department provide professional support and development, as shown by the following items:	Number of respondents= 44 to 47			
		No incentive %	**In the future** %	**Sometimes** %	**Available** %	**Importance**
1	Professional development	26	6	47	21	98
2	Project acquisition and management skills	23	9	38	30	98
3	Staff for giving career advice	40	11	32	17	96
4	Manager takes responsibility for career advice	17	7	43	33	98
5	Women are encouraged for presentations internally	27	2	38	33	97
6	Women are encouraged for presentations externally	4	11	43	43	100
7	Exit interviews are held	65	5	26	5	85
8	Peer support is encouraged	28	6	45	21	89
9	Women are encouraged to network	26	11	47	17	93
10	Faculty committees receive feedback from networks	45	10	38	8	83
11	Mentors are available for introduction	57	7	28	9	100
12	Staff is encouraged to be a mentor	67	9	22	2	86
13	Professor takes comments about career issues serious	39	14	34	14	97

Table 3 shows that the majority of our respondents have possibilities to develop professionally and they find it highly important, such as attending courses for project acquisition (68%), giving presentations externally (86%), giving internal presentations (71%) and participating in peer support groups (66%). 64% of the respondents feel encouraged to network.

Many respondents (76%) think that their manager gives career advice and find it very important. However, 53% of the respondents state that the professor does not take the career related comments seriously.

The majority of respondents do not perceive any incentives in terms of encouragement to be a mentor (67%) or incentives to have exit interviews (65%). Further, 57% have not had the mentor who was available to them for introducing the new working environment although they see it as very important. However, 28% of the respondents mention that mentoring programme is sometimes offered and they find it extremely important, which may refer to the UT mentoring programme available at the central level which is offered once per year. However, this programme is not dedicated to introducing the employees to the workplace.

Table 4. Appointment and promotion processes

2	Appointment and promotion processes	Number of respondents=40 to 43				
		Never	**In the future**	**Sometimes**	**Always**	**Importance**
		%	%	%	%	%
1	Encouraged to apply	33	5	40	21	98
2	Guidance for applicants	45	3	45	8	100
3	Feedback for unsuccessful applicants	46	13	31	10	98
4	Attempts to identify external women for appointments	32	7	41	20	85
5	Selection criteria and appointments are reviewed for bias	54	8	28	10	90
6	Selection panels include women	19	5	33	43	93
7	Monitoring of Nr. of women shortlisted and appointed	64	10	21	5	82
8	Transparency of promotion criteria and procedures	44	5	36	15	100
9	Promotion outcomes are reviewed against stated criteria	49	6	34	11	97

The respondents have indicated that the transparency of promotion criteria and procedures as well as the guidance for applicants are of outmost importance as seen in Table 4. 61% of our respondents feel encouraged to apply for a promotion and find it very important. Similarly, 61% of our respondents think that their department attempts to identify external women for appointments. Only 8% of the respondents always receive guidance in this promotion process

while 45% receive this guidance sometimes. Interestingly, 76% of the respondents indicated that the selection panels include women in the selection process, which shows the prevalence of this practice at the UT.

There is a perceived lack of adequate feedback in case the promotion is denied among 46% of the respondents. The outcomes of promotion are not reviewed against stated criteria in the view of 49% of our respondents while this is regarded as a very important (97%). Further, nearly half of our respondents see the lack of transparency of promotion criteria and procedures, and more than half 54% perceive the absence of control for bias. This make us think that in order to make career as a female academic at the University of Twente you need a lot of trial and error in order to succeed. At the moment as indicated by our respondents it is difficult to detect bias due to the low transparency of the application, selection and promotion of women.

Table 5. **Departmental structures and culture**

3	Departmental structures and culture	Number of respondents=40 to 45				
						Importance
		Never	**In the future**	**Sometimes**	**Always**	
		%	%	%	%	%
1	Workload and work/life balance is discussed	48	9	30	14	84
2	Workload of administration/teaching/research is balanced	36	11	38	16	97
3	Roles and committee memberships are rotated	40	5	33	21	95
4	Contribution to teaching and administration are rewarded	38	7	38	17	97
5	Open communication with management about resources	21	2	33	44	100
6	Part-timers and sick people take part in department activities	14	5	38	43	97
7	Flexibility around family commitments	5	14	38	43	100
8	Demonstration of work/life balance by management	29	5	31	36	100
9	Staff profile (%of women) is monitored	55	8	28	10	74
10	Planning of meetings are between 9 and 5	32	7	24	37	80
11	Images reflect contributions of women (websites etc)	25	2	30	42	84

	Management shows dedication to equal opportunities	34	7	39	20	87
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As seen in Table 5, three areas were of outmost importance among our respondents: demonstration of work/life balance by the management, flexibility around family commitments, and open communication with management about resources.
A high percentage of our respondents perceive flexibility around family commitments and also the inclusion of part-timers in the life of the department (both 81%). Managers demonstrate a good example in work/life balance for 67% of the respondents. There is openness in discussing the resources with the managers according to 77% of our respondents. As perceived by 72% of the respondents, internal and external communication reflects the contribution of women and the managers show dedication to equal opportunities as seen by 59% percent of our respondents.

The planning of the meetings also takes work/life balance into consideration, 61% states that they are taking place between 9 and 5 o'clock. We know from other research[1] that a good work/life balance is important in retaining employees, even more for women then for men. However, more then half of the respondents (57%) point out that the workload and the work/life balance are not the topics to be discussed in their department. It seems that informally there are possibilities for work/life balance although they are not a topic for discussions in the department.

The balance between teaching/administration/research is perceived as very important for our respondents. A high percentage (47%) of respondents state that there is no balance between different activities. 45% think that teaching and administration are not rewarded. Literature[2] points out that females are overrepresented in the non-scoring tasks like teaching and administration, so it is the topic of importance discussing the promotion criteria and the allocation of different tasks within departments. 45% indicates that rotation of roles and committee memberships are not rotated, which tends to concentrate the experience and visibility among a small number of staff.

Only 38% of the respondents think that management monitors the percentage of women in different functions. Although this is done at the central university level and reported to the faculty deans, the communication seems to be insufficient.

Part 2: Identifying the areas of interest for career development

The second part of the survey was aiming to get an indication of the areas that our members would like to tackle to facilitate their careers. FFNT Board will take into consideration the identified topics for the future workshops and lectures.

1. Focus on ambition
38% knows her ambition and wants to realise it.
50% is somewhat focused on her ambition
The remaining 12% is hardly focused or not focused at all.

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[1] National Academy of Sciences (2007) *Beyond bias and barriers: fulfilling the potential of women in academic science and engineering.* National Academic Press, US. page 96-99

[2] Winchester, H. e.a. (2006) Academic women's promotions in Australian universities. *Employee Relations* Vol. 28. No 6 p. 505-522.

2. Knowing the game that is played within our organisation
9% understands the rules of the game played and can use it to realise her ambition
64% understands some of the rules
27% hardly understands the game that is played within our organisation or doesn't know the rules at all.

3. Glass ceiling at home
66% doesn't have a glass ceiling at home which means they organised effectively their domestic tasks by outsourcing them or having some-one who is co responsible for them.
19% has a small glass ceiling at home
15% has a large or a huge glass ceiling at home

4. Combining children and a career
This question was only filled in by 66% of the respondents. Of these 66%:
44% is able to combine children and a career well
50% only sometimes experiences a difficulty in combining her career with children
6% reports having frequent problems with combining children and her career.

5. Maintaining a network with decision makers
Only 9% has a solid network with decision makers and is sure that she is visible.
57% has a small network with decision makers
The rest (34%) doesn't have a significant vertical network

6. Benchmarking career and salary
Only 14% benchmarks her career and her salary with her colleagues and takes action is she lags behind.
45% sometimes benchmarks her career
40% hardly ever or never benchmarks her career with colleagues.

7. Supporting boss
Only 11% has a boss who helps in her career steps.
60% has a boss who sometimes helps
29% has a non supportive boss.

8. Playing the right team role
52% feels that she plays the right role in her team by taking a substantive part in team responsibilities and being useful for the team
39% plays the right role to some extent
8% feels she hardly plays the right role or doesn't play a role at all.

9. Balance between power and communication
22% employs the right balance between power and communication.
64% employs the right balance to some extent
13% doesn't have or hardly has a right balance between power and communication

10. Coping with adversity
20% copes well with adversity by not taking it personally
61% copes reasonably well with adversity
19% is hardly able to cope well with adversity or even gets anxious and discouraged

11. Use of female talents
17% makes good use of her female talents by knowing them and using them at the right moment.
63% uses to some extent her female talents
20% hardly uses her female talents.

Conclusions

1. The vast majority of our respondents are encouraged to advance their careers by the management and see the possibilities for the professional development. A high percentage of the respondents to the FFNT survey have indicated they would need mentoring to be introduced into their new work environment. Thus, organizing a mentoring programme within the faculty for the newly arrived would be very welcome.

2. Transparency of promotion criteria and procedures is very important for the career of women[3], as men have more ways to learn this informally[4]. The transparency is an issue at our university as stated by half of our respondents. These findings are in line with the outcomes of the recently held employee satisfaction survey at the UT. Male and female respondents in this study also state that promotion criteria are neither clear nor fair.[5]

3. Although workload and work/life balance are not discussed in the departments as seen by half of our respondents, 60 to 81% of the respondents perceive flexibility in different work/life issues. The question of the balance between the division of tasks of teaching, research and administration has been perceived as very important for our respondents. A high percentage (47%) of respondents state that there is no balance between different activities. It would be interesting to understand the distribution of female and male academics in different tasks in all the faculties of the UT to understand better this concern.

4. The second part of the survey has indicated five topic areas of interest to our FFNT members:

- Playing the rules of the game in a university
- Building an adequate network
- Benchmarking your career advancement
- Getting your boss involved in stimulating your career
- Coping with adversity.

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[3] Brink, M. (2009) Behind the scenes of science, a gender research on professional recruitment and selection practices at Dutch universities. RUN
John Hopkins University. Blz 223 Beyond Bias and Barriers NAP 2007
Foshi, M. (2005) Gender and the double standards in competence assessment.
[4] Valian, V. (1998) *Why so slow?* MIT press.
[5] Samenvatting Medewerkertevredenheidonderzoek Universiteit Twente sept/okt 2009

5. Due to the fact that PhD candidates and postdocs are considered temporary employees and taking into account their low response rate FFNT Board would like in the future to direct the survey on career progression at the UT to permanent and temporary UD/UHD/Research Associates separately from a survey identifying the needs and issues of PhDs and postdocs towards their career progression. Both surveys should also include questions on how the FFNT can serve these two communities better and evaluate their satisfaction with the network activities.