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## Satisfaction among Academics at Cornell:

April 2017

*Prepared by Institutional Research & Planning*

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This report examines measures of satisfaction with one's position at Cornell as reported across types of academic positions on the 2016 Academic Work Life (AWL) Survey. For tenured and tenure-track (TTT) faculty, we also compare 2016 AWL results for overall satisfaction and satisfaction with aspects of work responsibilities with parallel results obtained from the 2010 and 2005 Faculty Work Life surveys.

### Overall Satisfaction by Academic Position, 2016

The population for the 2016 AWL survey included three broad categories of academic positions:

- **TTT faculty:** Tenured and tenure track faculty holding a professorial rank of assistant professor, associate professor or professor.
- **Academic professionals:** Academic employees providing instruction or engaged in research and or extension work. Titles include lecturers, research associates, and extension associates.
- **Academic short term:** Academic visitors and other employees on a non-renewable term contract. Titles include postdoctoral fellows and visiting professors.

The survey began by asking TTT faculty the following question:

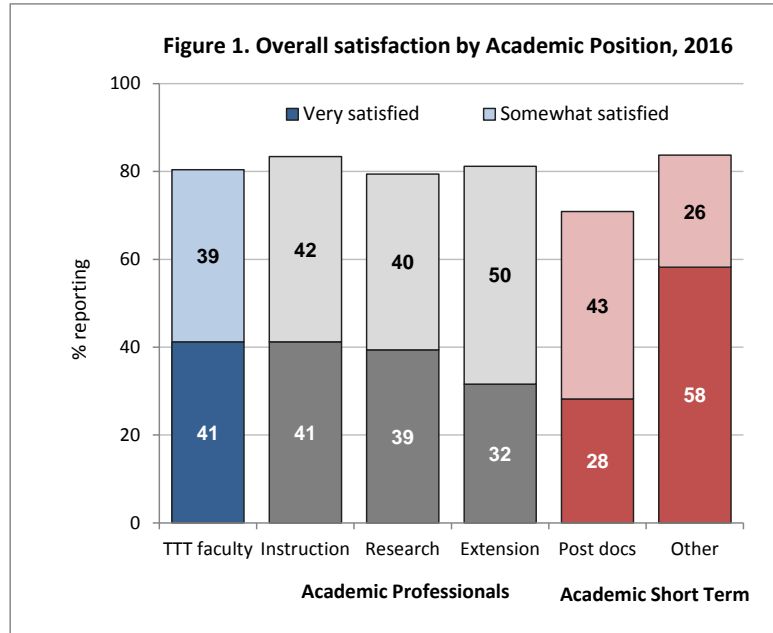
*Overall, how satisfied are you being a faculty member at Cornell?*

Academic professionals and academic short term employees were asked a slightly modified question:

*Overall, how satisfied are you being an academic at Cornell?*

Both versions of the question offered a 5-point response scale where 1 was “very dissatisfied” and 5 was “very satisfied.”

Figure 1 shows the percentages of “very satisfied” and “somewhat satisfied” responses across types of academic positions:



Overall satisfaction is high for all types of academic positions with roughly 80% or more of survey respondents indicating they were “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” with their position at Cornell.

That being said, satisfaction varies significantly across these positions. In particular, academic short term employees with visiting or courtesy appointments reported the highest satisfaction with fully 84% saying they were either “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied.” Satisfaction was lowest among academic short term employees with postdoctoral appointments with 71% indicating they were “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied.”

## Trend Data on Overall Satisfaction among TTT Faculty

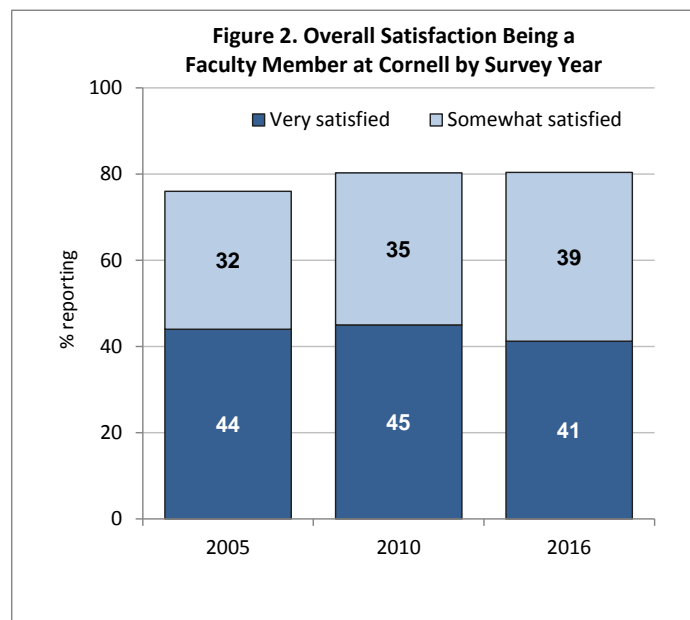
The rest of this report focuses on tenured and tenure-track (TTT) faculty. The following charts compare their overall satisfaction, and satisfaction with aspects of work and resources to support work, on the basis of faculty members' gender, race/ethnicity and rank.

When possible, we compare survey results obtained from the 2016 survey to responses from the 2010 and 2005 surveys of Cornell faculty. This analysis does not provide an in-depth examination of the factors which may explain observed variations in satisfaction or endorsement. We anticipate conducting such multivariate analyses over the next academic year.

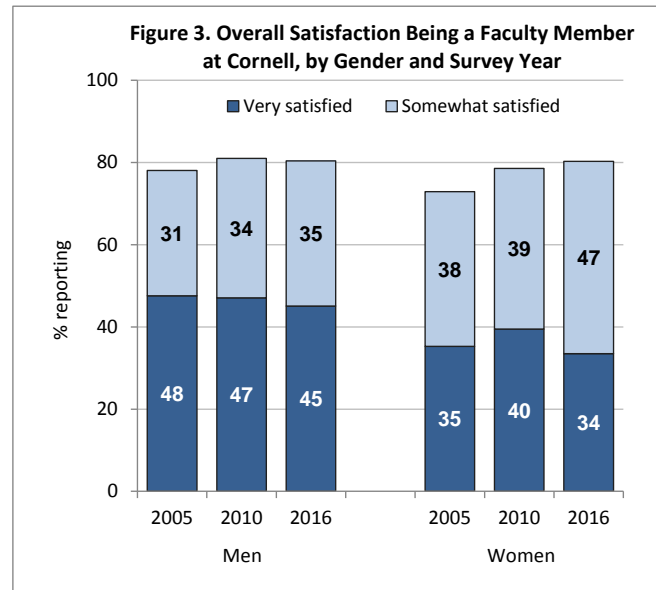
The following charts (Figures 2 through 5) compare overall satisfaction among TTT faculty in 2016 to responses from the 2010 and 2005 surveys of Cornell faculty.

In 2016, fully 80% of TTT faculty were either "very satisfied" or "somewhat satisfied" with their faculty role (Figure 2). This is consistent with survey results from 2010 (80%) and higher than results from the 2005 faculty survey (76%).

We note the proportion of "very satisfied" faculty has declined slightly in 2016. Specifically, 41% of TTT faculty said they were "very satisfied" overall in 2016 as compared to 45% in 2010 and 44% in 2005.

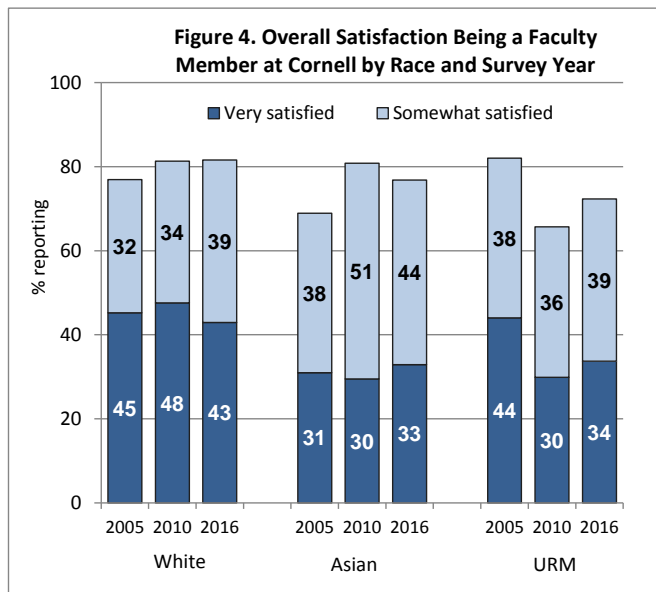


Overall satisfaction among women TTT faculty has increased over time (Figure 3). Compared to results from the 2005 survey, the percentage of “very satisfied” women in 2016 is essentially the same, while the proportion of “somewhat satisfied” women has increased by nine percentage points. Further, in 2016, equal proportions of men and women reported being “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” in their role as a faculty member at Cornell.



Gender differences remain in the intensity of satisfaction reported. In 2016, there is an 11-point gender gap, favoring men, in the percent of “very satisfied” TTT faculty; this is slightly smaller than the associated 13-point gender gap seen in 2005.

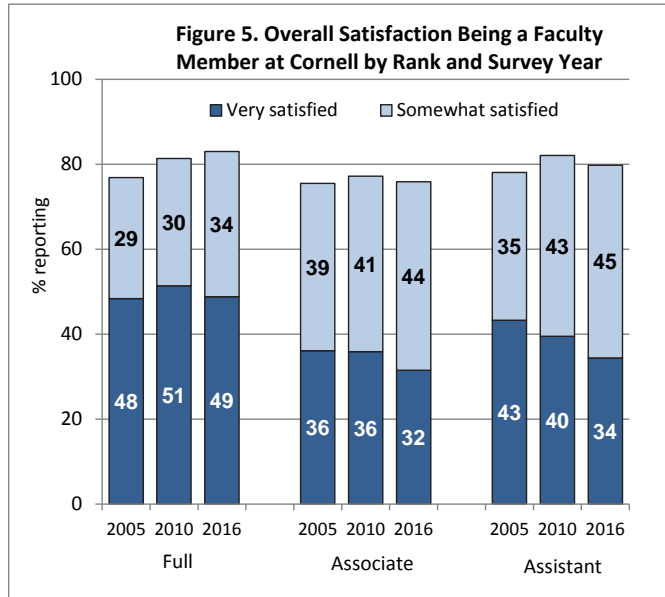
Patterns of overall satisfaction associated with TTT faculty members’ race/ethnicity have varied over time, particularly among Asian and under-represented minority [URM] faculty (Figure 4). Among Asian TTT faculty, overall satisfaction (“very” or “somewhat”) declined slightly in 2016 compared to 2010, but remains markedly higher compared to 2005. Overall satisfaction among URM TTT faculty declined



substantively from 2005 to 2010, but the 2016 survey results show a 7-point increase in the percentage of “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” URM faculty.

However, it continues to be the case that Asian and URM faculty are less likely to be “very satisfied” as a faculty member at Cornell than are their white colleagues.

Figure 5 compares overall satisfaction by academic rank. Over the three survey years, full professors have consistently reported the highest overall satisfaction, with roughly half indicating they are “very satisfied” as a faculty member at Cornell. Assistant and, to an even greater extent, associate professors are much less likely to be “very satisfied.” Further, this rank-associated gap in being “very satisfied” has widened since the 2010 survey.

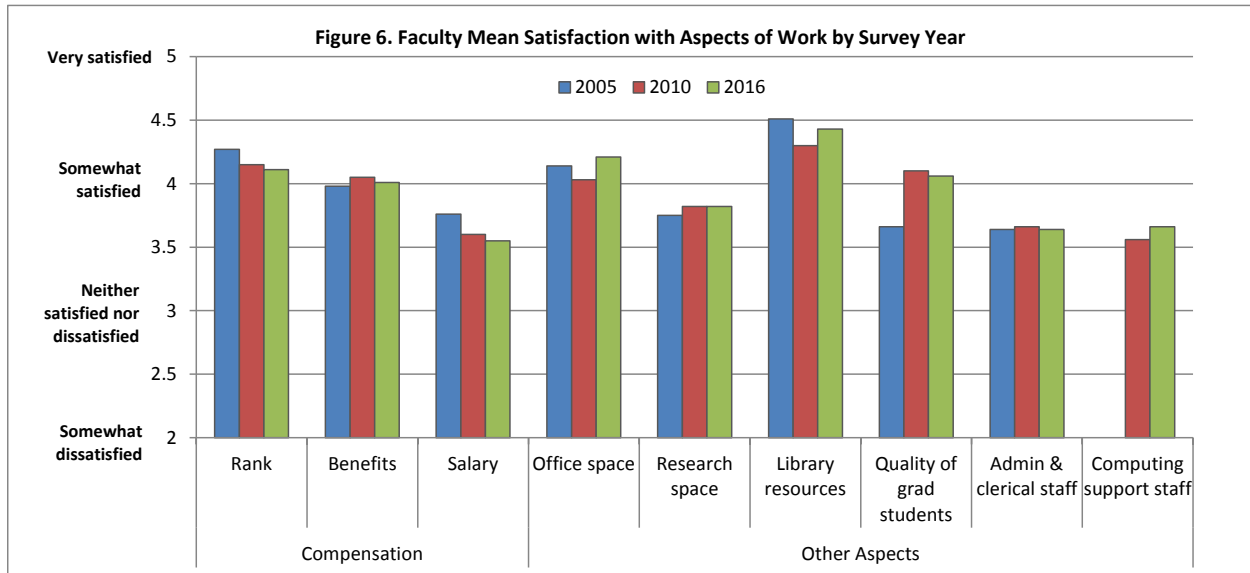


### Satisfaction with Aspects of Work and Resources to Support Work among TTT Faculty

The Academic Work Life Survey included separate items regarding satisfaction with various aspects of one’s work (e.g., salary, office space) and with resources provided to support one’s work (e.g., support for assessing student learning, support for securing grants).

Figures 6 through 10 show mean scores for 23 such items. Means are based on a five-point response scale where 1 = “very dissatisfied” and 5 = “very satisfied.” Many of these questions were also asked on the 2005 and 2010 faculty surveys; when available, comparisons to mean scores for these survey years are included.

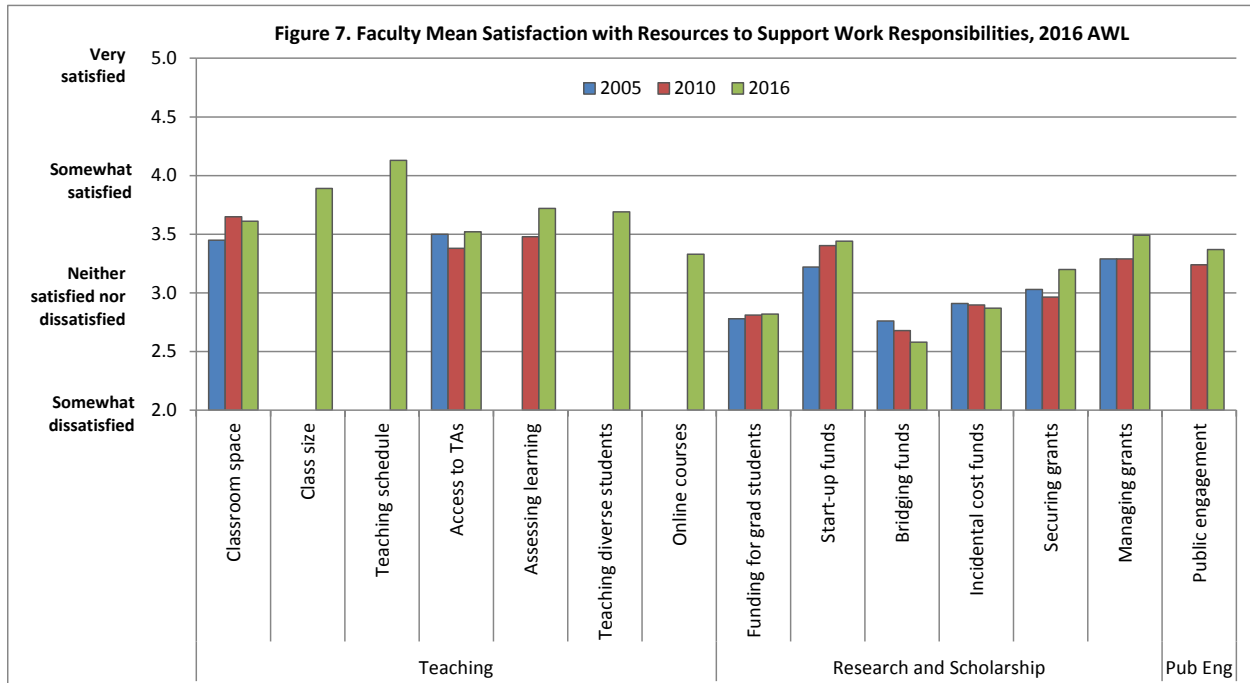
Figure 6 compares mean scores for satisfaction with various aspects of work for TTT faculty across the three survey years.



It should be noted that TTT faculty are satisfied, on the whole, with the work aspects considered here; all the items have mean scores of 3.5 or higher (i.e., above the midpoint of our scale). Faculty respondents in 2016 were most satisfied with library resources, office space, quality of graduate students and current rank. These four items all had mean scores greater than four (where 4 = “somewhat satisfied” and 5 = “very satisfied”). Faculty were least satisfied with their salary.

Comparing satisfaction scores across the survey years, the largest gains in satisfaction are associated with office space and the quality of graduate students. Satisfaction with salary has declined slightly over the survey years, while the remaining items show little change.

Figure 7 shows trend data on TTT faculty members' mean satisfaction with resources provided by Cornell to support their various work responsibilities.



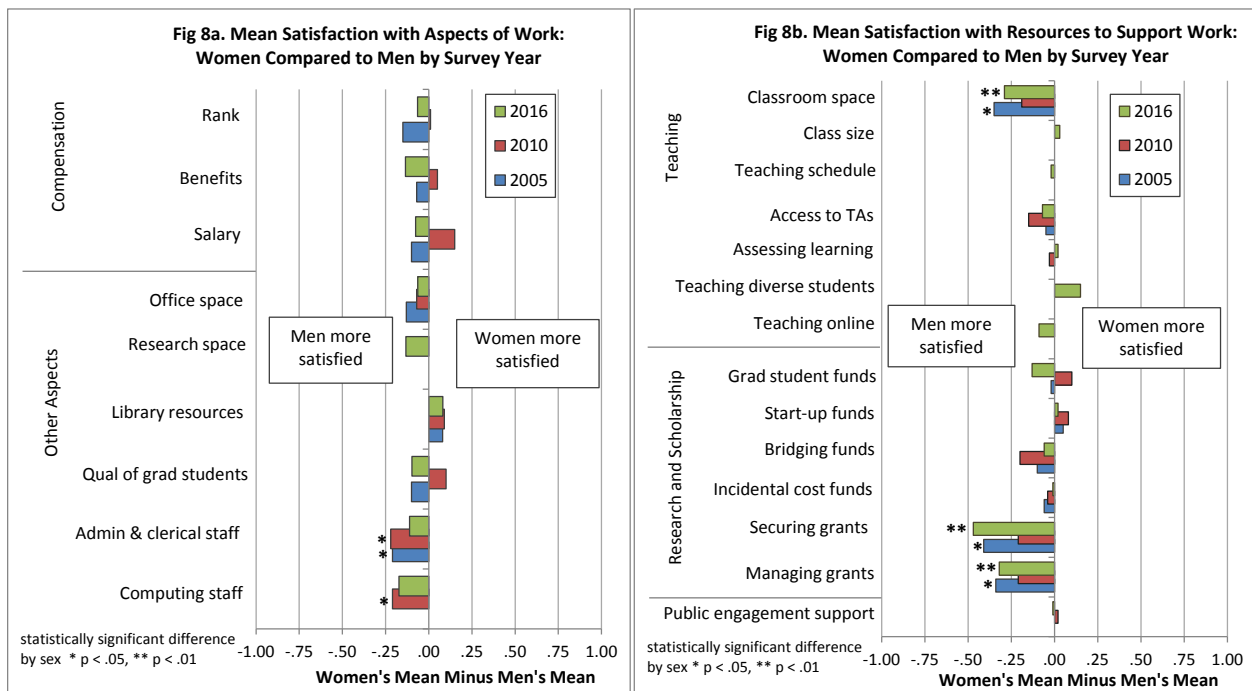
TTT faculty in 2016 were most satisfied with the resources provided to support their teaching responsibilities, in particular: teaching schedules, class size, support for assessing student learning, and support for teaching strategies that address the needs of diverse students and classroom environments.

They were least satisfied with resources provided to support their research, scholarship and creativity: funding for graduate students, bridging funds, and funding for incidental costs related to research. These research support items all had mean scores below three (where 3 = “neither satisfied nor dissatisfied”).

However several forms of research support show gains in satisfaction over time. Compared to earlier survey years, TTT faculty respondents in 2016 were more satisfied with start-up funds, support for securing grants, and support for managing grants and/or research accounts.

## Satisfaction with Aspects of Work and Resources to Support Work among TTT Faculty: Women Compared to Men

Figures 8a and 8b show the differences in women’s mean satisfaction with aspects of their work and the resources provided by Cornell to support their work relative to the associated means for men. Values on the horizontal axis show the difference (women’s mean satisfaction minus men’s mean satisfaction) for each item. Asterisks indicate mean differences that are statistically significant (\* statistically significant at  $p < .05$ , \*\* statistically significant at  $p < .01$ ). With few exceptions, women reported lower satisfaction with these aspects and resources than men.



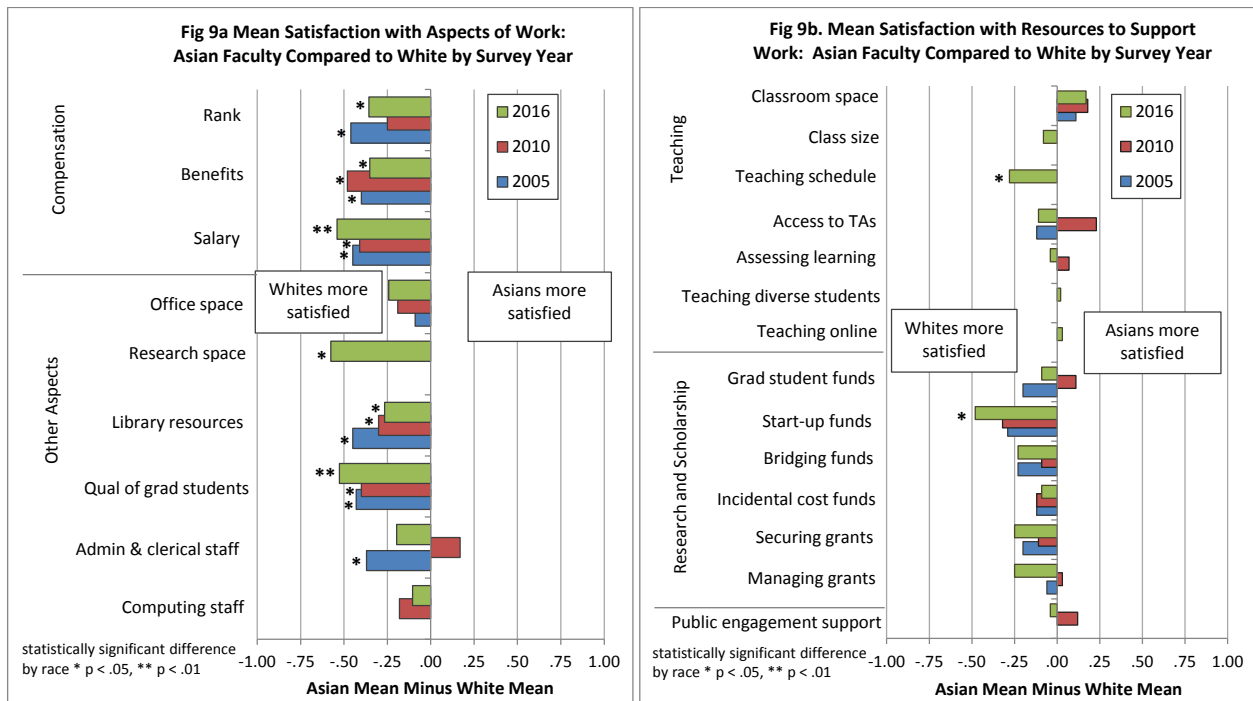
Overall, gender differences in satisfaction with aspects of work were smaller in 2016 than in previous survey years. Women were significantly more satisfied than men with the support provided for teaching diverse students.

However, gender differences, favoring men, in satisfaction with resources to support work persist among 2016 respondents. In particular, women reported significantly lower satisfaction with classroom space, and with the support provided to secure grants and to manage grants or research accounts.



## Satisfaction with Aspects of Work and Resources to Support Work among TTT Faculty: Asian Faculty Compared to White Faculty

Figures 9a and 9b show the differences in Asian TTT faculty members' mean satisfaction with aspects of their work and the resources provided by Cornell to support their work relative to the associated means for white faculty. Values on the horizontal axis show the difference (Asian mean satisfaction minus White mean satisfaction) for each item. Asterisks indicate mean differences that are statistically significant. Asian faculty were less satisfied than white faculty with many aspects of work and resources; for several items, gaps in Asian-White satisfaction were larger in 2016 than in 2010.

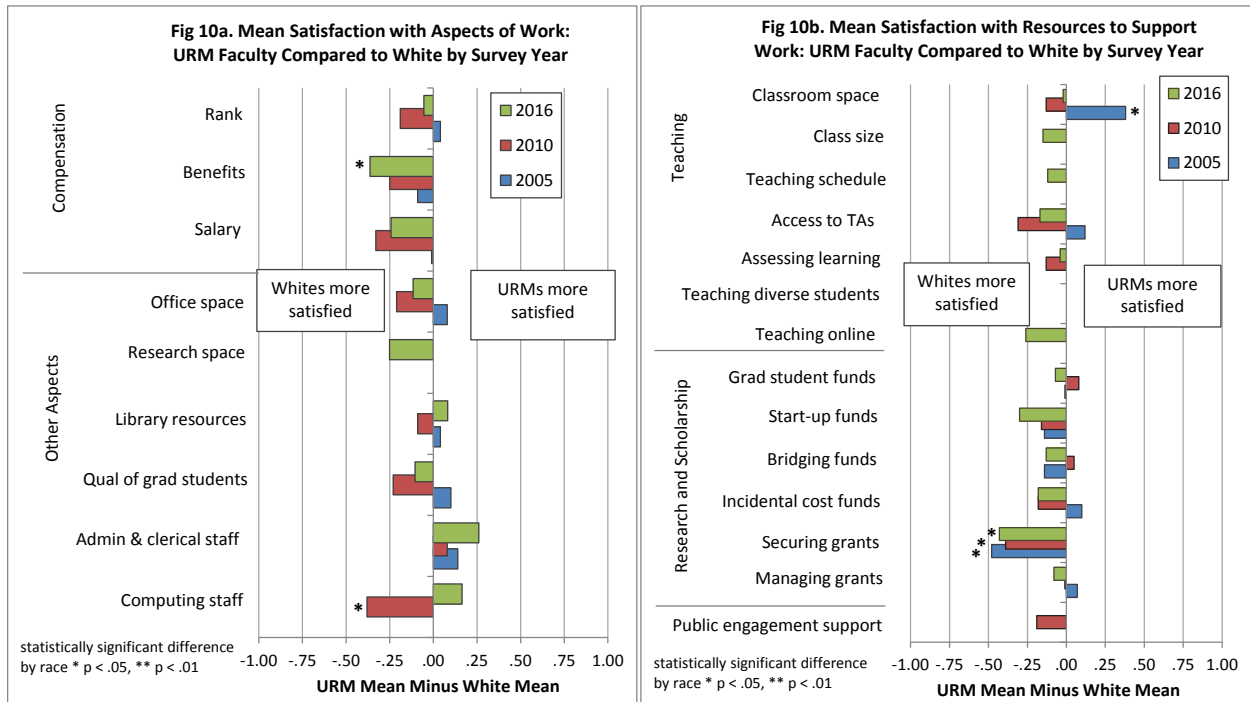


Among our 2016 survey respondents, statistically significant differences in satisfaction, all favoring white TTT faculty, were observed for eight items. The largest gaps (half of a point or greater on our 5-point response scale) were associated with: salary, research space, library resources, quality of graduate students, and start-up funds for research.

Asian TTT faculty were more satisfied with classroom space than white faculty; this difference was not large.

## Satisfaction with Aspects of Work and Resources to Support Work among TTT Faculty: URM Faculty Compared to White Faculty

Figures 10a and 10b show the differences in URM TTT faculty members' mean satisfaction with aspects of their work and resources provided to support their work relative to the associated means for white faculty. Values on the horizontal axis show the difference (URM mean satisfaction minus White mean satisfaction) for each item. Asterisks indicate statistically significant mean differences.

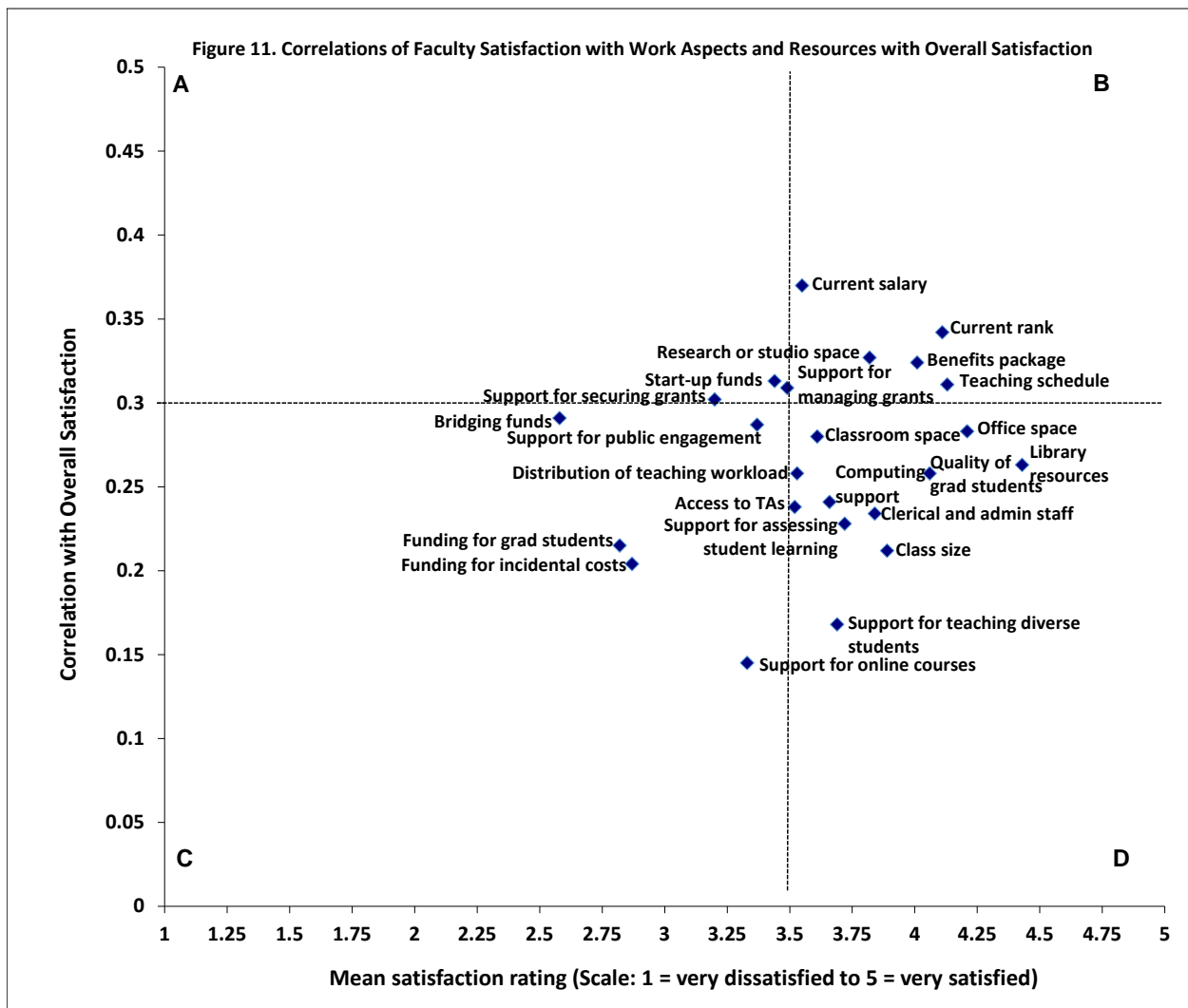


We note that a number of satisfaction gaps have decreased among 2016 survey respondents (i.e., satisfaction associated with rank, salary, office space, quality of graduate students, access to TAs, and support for securing grants), and that URM faculty were more satisfied than white faculty with library resources, administrative and clerical staff, and computing staff.

URM TTT faculty were less satisfied than white faculty with other aspects of work and resources to support that work. The largest, and statistically significant, gaps in satisfaction for 2016 survey respondents were associated with: benefits and support for securing grants. There were also substantial gaps (i.e., greater than one-quarter of a point difference on our 5-point response scale) in URM faculty's satisfaction with research space, support for on-line teaching, and start-up funds for research.

## Correlates of Overall Satisfaction for TTT Faculty in 2016

While all measures of faculty satisfaction with one's work and resources to support that work are important in their own right, those items that have a stronger relationship to overall satisfaction may be of particular interest in that they may suggest strategies for increasing overall satisfaction. Using 2016 survey data, Figure 11 shows the correlation between overall satisfaction among TTT faculty, and their satisfaction with aspects of work and resources provided to support work (i.e., the survey items shown in Figures 6 and 7).



Values on the horizontal axis show mean satisfaction with a particular work aspect or resource provided to support work. Items that are closer to the left side of this figure (quadrants A and C) are those with which TTT faculty are *less* satisfied (e.g., bridging funds and funding for graduate students) while items further to the right are those with which TTT faculty are *more* satisfied (e.g., library resources and office space).

The vertical axis shows how strongly each aspect and resource is correlated with overall satisfaction. Items appearing closer to the top of this figure (quadrants A and B) have a stronger relationship with overall satisfaction (e.g., current salary and current rank) than those that are closer to the bottom (e.g., support for teaching diverse students and support for online courses).

Considering these two axes together the four quadrants group our measures of satisfaction with work aspects and resources to support work as follows:

<i>Quadrant A</i> : stronger relationship to overall satisfaction, lower item satisfaction	<i>Quadrant B</i> : stronger relationship to overall satisfaction, higher item satisfaction
<i>Quadrant C</i> : weaker relationship to overall satisfaction, lower item satisfaction	<i>Quadrant D</i> : weaker relationship to overall satisfaction, higher item satisfaction

Items appearing in the upper right (quadrant B) are strong correlates of overall satisfaction for which satisfaction among Cornell TTT faculty is comparatively high. These may be considered aspects of faculty members' work and resources in which Cornell's performance is comparatively strong. This quadrant includes satisfaction with: current salary; current rank; research, lab or studio space; benefits package; and teaching schedule.

Items appearing in the upper left (quadrant A) are also strong correlates of overall satisfaction but for which TTT faculty satisfaction is comparatively low. In view of their strong relationship to overall satisfaction, these aspects may warrant further institutional consideration. This quadrant includes satisfaction with resources to support research: start-up funds, support for securing grants, and support for managing grants and/or research accounts.