



---

## 2010 Faculty Work Life Survey: Satisfaction with Work Life

January 2011

*Prepared by Marne Einarson, Office of Institutional Research and Planning*

---

The 2010 Faculty Work Life (FWL) Survey opened on September 22 and closed on October 25<sup>th</sup>. The FWL survey asked about the work activities in which faculty members are engaged and the extent to which they feel Cornell supports that work; perceptions of departmental climate; adequacy of office and research space; experiences with hiring and tenure, and plans to stay at or leave Cornell; and how life outside of Cornell meshes with faculty responsibilities. The survey replicated many measures from a similar survey conducted in Fall 2005 but also included new questions of interest.

This report begins with a brief look at response rates for the 2010 survey. From there, it examines several dimensions of faculty satisfaction with work life: overall satisfaction with being a faculty member at Cornell; satisfaction with various aspects of their work responsibilities, and with the resources provided by Cornell to support those responsibilities; and, finally, the association between satisfaction with work responsibilities and resources, and overall satisfaction with the faculty role. Subsequent reports will focus on other content areas of the survey

### Report Contents

---

A. Response Rates	p. 2
B. Overall Satisfaction	p. 3
C. Satisfaction with Work Responsibilities and Resources	p. 5
• By Gender	p. 7
• By Race/Ethnicity	p. 9
D. Correlates of Overall Satisfaction	p. 11

For this first look at the data, we examined satisfaction for Cornell faculty as a whole, and also compared responses on the basis of faculty members' gender; race/ethnicity, rank, and college or field. When possible, we also compared results obtained from the 2010 FWL survey to those reported by faculty completing the 2005 FWL survey. This analysis does not provide an in-depth examination of the factors which may explain variation in satisfaction. We anticipate conducting such multivariate analyses over the summer of 2011.

## A. Response Rates

The FWL Survey was conducted during the fall semester of 2010. All tenured and tenure-track faculty hired as of September 2009 and holding at least a 50% appointment (n=1,514) were invited to participate in this web-based survey. Nine hundred and eight-nine faculty completed some portion of the survey for a 65% response rate overall. Ninety percent of all respondents who started the survey completed the entire instrument. These figures match the response rates achieved on the 2005 FWL Survey.

Table 1 compares characteristics of the survey population and respondents. The resulting sample includes 278 women and 711 men. Eighty-five percent of respondents are White. The sample is 54% full professors, 29% associate professors, and 17% assistant professors. The predominance of men, Whites and full professors in the survey sample reflects their prevalence within the institution; in fact both men and full professors were *less* likely to respond to the survey than were women and assistant/associate professors.

Response rates also varied by race/ethnicity and by college or disciplinary field. Asian faculty responded at a significantly lower rate (59%) than White (66%) and Underrepresented-minority (68%) faculty. Across colleges and fields, Human Ecology, Nutritional Sciences, ILR and Centers all had response rates of 74% or higher; the Johnson Graduate School of Management had the lowest response rate at 50%.

These response patterns across segments of Cornell faculty differed somewhat from those observed in the 2005 FWL survey. Compared to 2005, the 2010 survey garnered slightly lower response rates among women and assistant professors.

We note there is significant overlap in respondents to the 2005 and 2010 FWL surveys. Sixty percent of faculty who responded to the 2010 FWL survey *also* responded to the 2005 survey. Faculty who completed *both* surveys were older, held more senior rank, and were more likely to be White.

Table 1. 2010 Faculty Work Life Survey Population and Respondents

Population	Survey Population		Survey Sample		Response Rate
	N	as % of population	N	as % of respondent	
Overall	1514	100%	989	100%	65%
By gender*					
Men	1114	74%	711	72%	64%
Women	400	26%	278	28%	70%
By race/ethnicity <sup>a</sup>					
White	1263	84%	829	85%	66%
Asian	135	9%	79	8%	59%
URM	100	7%	68	7%	68%
By rank*					
Assistant	243	16%	166	17%	68%
Associate	408	27%	285	29%	70%
Full	863	57%	538	54%	62%
By college/field*					
CALS-AgSci	210	14%	145	15%	69%
CALS-SocSci	79	5%	52	5%	66%
CALS-Bio	61	4%	40	4%	66%
AAP	48	3%	29	3%	60%
A&S-Hum	222	15%	147	15%	66%
A&S-PhySci	126	8%	77	8%	61%
A&S-SocSci	102	7%	62	6%	61%
A&S-Bio	39	3%	29	3%	74%
Engineering	222	15%	149	15%	67%
Hum Ec	67	4%	50	5%	75%
Hotel	37	2%	21	2%	57%
ILR	50	3%	37	4%	74%
Nutrition	30	2%	24	2%	80%
JGSM	46	3%	23	2%	50%
Law	41	3%	24	2%	59%
Vet	121	8%	70	7%	58%
Centers	13	1%	10	1%	77%

<sup>a</sup>Excludes faculty who reported multiple races or did not report race.

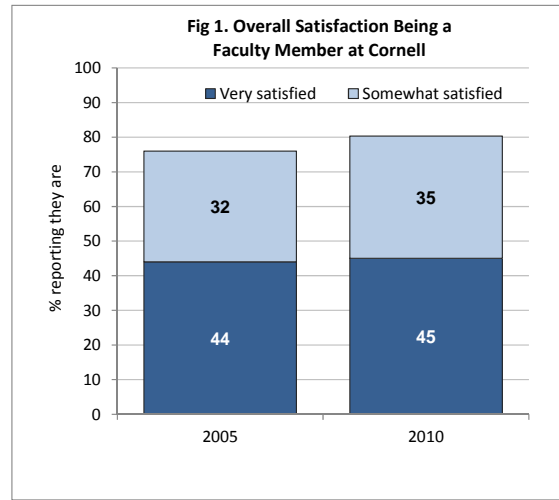
\*Significant differences in response rate at  $p < .05$  based on chi square.

## B. Overall Satisfaction

The first item on the Faculty Work Life Survey asked, “Overall, how satisfied are you being a faculty member at Cornell?” On a five-point scale where 1 was “very dissatisfied” and 5 was “very satisfied” the overall mean was 4.1, equivalent to being “somewhat satisfied.”

Fully 80% of Cornell faculty were satisfied (45% were “very satisfied” and another 35% were “somewhat satisfied”) with their faculty role.

As shown in Figure 1, this compares favorably to results from the previous FWL survey. In 2005, 77% of Cornell faculty were satisfied; of these, 44% were “very satisfied” and 33% were “somewhat satisfied.”

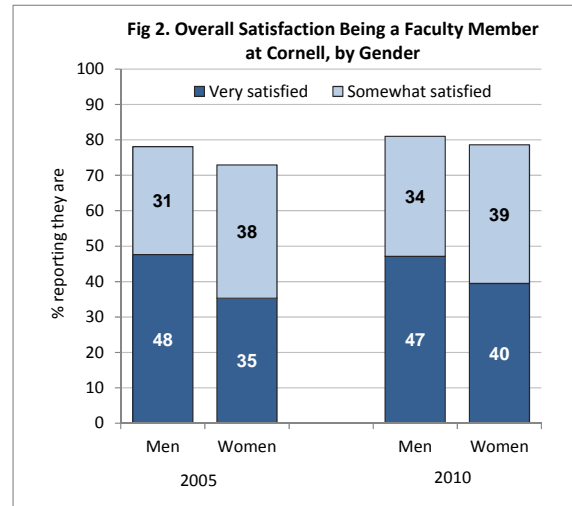


### Overall Satisfaction by Gender

The data reveal gender-based differences in overall satisfaction, favoring males, but this gap is smaller than was previously observed (Fig 2).

In the 2005 FWL survey, there was a 13 point gender gap in the percent of “very satisfied” faculty; forty-eight of men were “very satisfied” compared to just 35% of women.

In 2010, men were again more likely to report being “very satisfied” than women (47% versus 40%). While still statistically significant, the 2010 gender gap was just seven points.

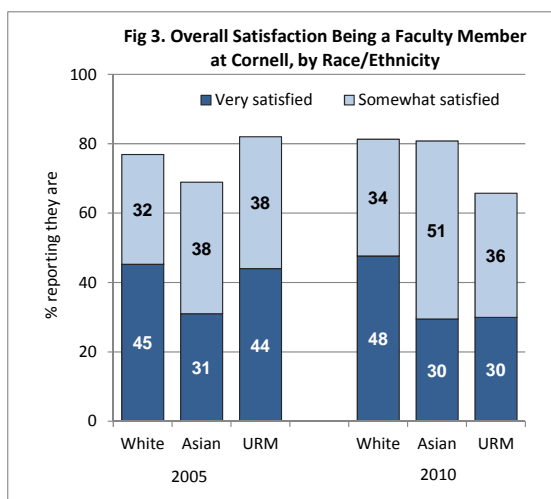


### Overall Satisfaction by Race/Ethnicity<sup>1</sup>

Overall satisfaction varies with faculty members’ race/ethnicity, and these differences are larger in the 2010 data (Fig 3, next page).

In broad terms, a larger percentage of White and Asian respondents to the 2010 survey were satisfied (very or somewhat) with being a faculty member than was observed in 2005; eighty-two percent of White faculty in 2010 were satisfied compared to 77% in 2005, and 81% of Asian faculty in 2010 were satisfied compared to

<sup>1</sup> Information on faculty members’ racial/ethnic identification is based on self-reports from the FWL survey and institutional records. Citizenship status is not included in these data so we cannot, for example, distinguish Asian foreign nationals from Asian American citizens; in this report, we use “Asian” to apply to both groups. “URM” refers to Under-represented-minority faculty; this includes faculty who self-report their race/ethnicity as African American, Hispanic or Latino, or American Indian/Alaska Native (or any combination of these races/ethnicities).



69% in 2005. However, for Asian faculty, this increase stems from a greater percent who reported being “somewhat satisfied” in 2010; they were still much less likely than White faculty to be “very satisfied.”

Only 66% of URM faculty reported being satisfied in 2010 compared to 82% in 2005. This difference primarily reflects a drop in the percent of URM faculty who were “very satisfied” – 30% in 2010 versus 44% in 2005.

We note these are cross-sectional comparisons. Still, it seems clear that Asian and, to an even greater extent, URM faculty members are significantly less satisfied with being a faculty member at Cornell than are their White peers.

### Overall Satisfaction by Rank, College and Field

Among the 2010 FWL respondents, overall satisfaction at Cornell also differed significantly by faculty members’ rank and undergraduate college or field. These differences largely mirrored patterns of overall satisfaction observed in the 2005 survey.

Full professors were much more satisfied than associate and assistant professors, with associate professors reporting the lowest satisfaction (e.g., 51% of full professors reported being “very satisfied” compared to 40% of assistant professors and 36% of associate professors).

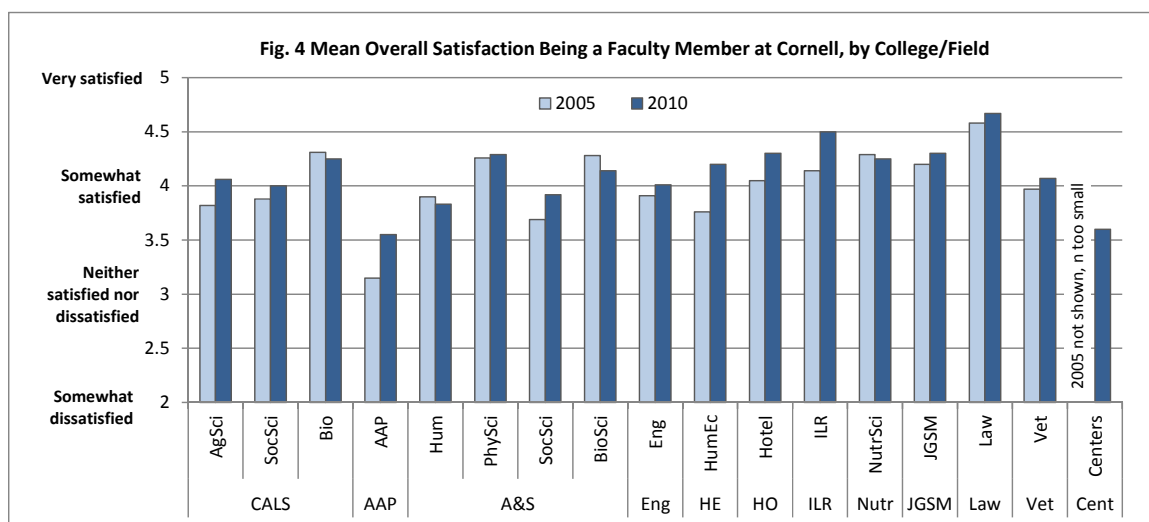


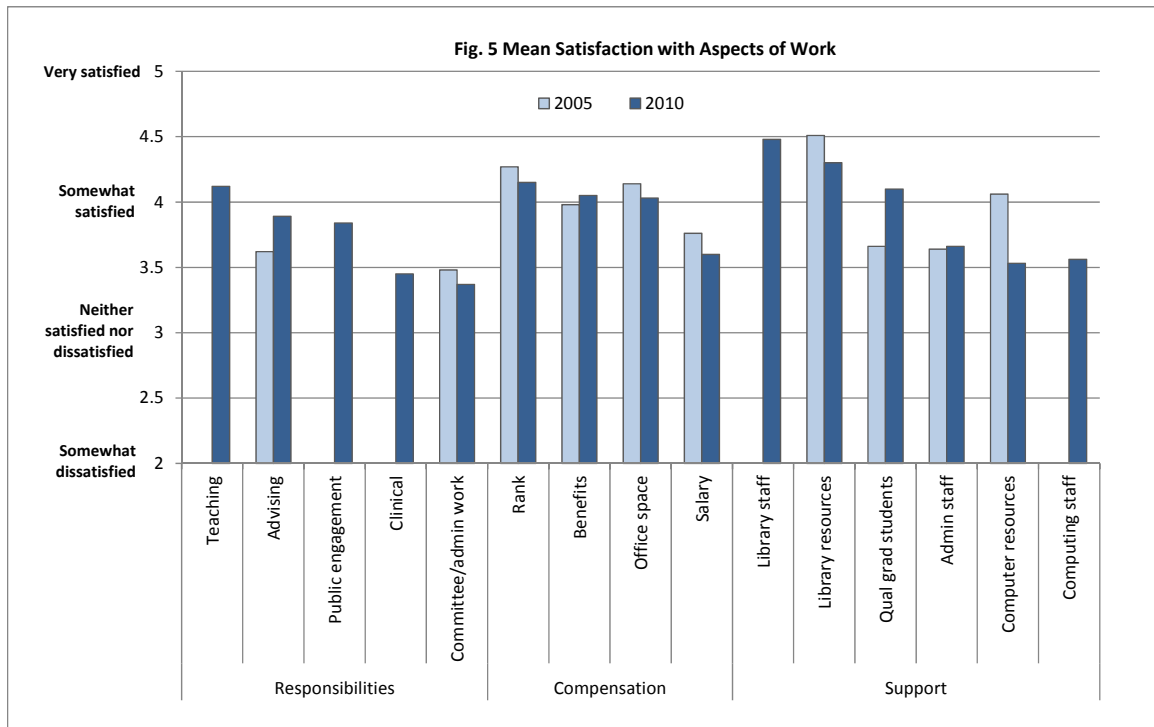
Figure 4 shows mean scores for overall satisfaction, by college and field, for FWL survey respondents in 2010 and 2005. Means are based on a five-point response scale for satisfaction where 1 = “very dissatisfied” and 5 = “very satisfied.”

On the whole, Law School faculty have reported the highest overall satisfaction (e.g., in 2010, 71% were “very satisfied”) while AAP faculty have reported the lowest (e.g., in 2010, just 35% were “very satisfied”).

In most colleges and fields, mean scores for overall satisfaction were higher in 2010 than in 2005. The largest positive shifts in overall satisfaction (greater than a third of a point on a five-point scale) were observed among faculty in AAP, Human Ecology, and ILR.

### C. Satisfaction with Work Responsibilities and Resources

The FWL survey included many separate items regarding satisfaction with one’s work responsibilities. Figures 5 and 6 show mean scores for 34 such items. Means are based on a five-point response scale where 1 = “very dissatisfied” and 5 = “very satisfied”; faculty members who reported that a particular aspect of work was “not applicable” to them were excluded from the mean calculation for that item. Many of these questions were also asked on the 2005 FWL survey; when available, mean scores for the corresponding 2005 item are included.<sup>2</sup>



#### *Work responsibilities*

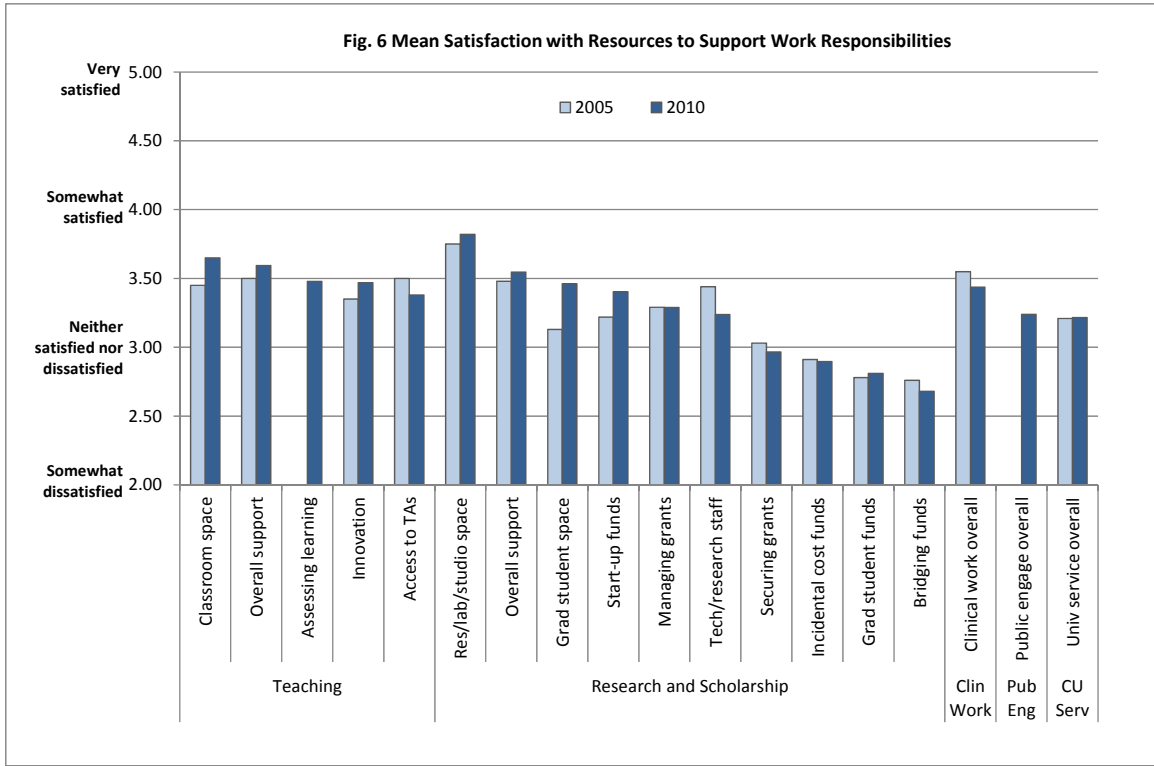
Figure 5 shows mean satisfaction scores for various aspects of faculty members’ work responsibilities. Relative to other items, faculty respondents in 2010 were most satisfied with: library staff and library resources; their current rank, benefits package and office space; teaching responsibilities; and the quality of graduate students. These items all had mean scores greater than 4 (where 4 = “somewhat satisfied” and 5 = “very satisfied”). Faculty were least satisfied with their clinical responsibilities (we note this item was applicable to only 78 of our 2010 respondents) and with their committee and administrative responsibilities.

Comparing satisfaction scores from 2005 and 2010, the largest differences are associated with “quality of graduate students” (with 2010 faculty being *more* satisfied”) and “computer resources” (with 2010 faculty being *less* satisfied).

<sup>2</sup> The following satisfaction questions were only asked in 2010: teaching responsibilities; public engagement responsibilities; clinical responsibilities; library staff; computing support staff; support for assessing and improving student learning; support for public engagement work.

*Resources to Support Work Responsibilities*

Figure 6 shows faculty members’ mean satisfaction with the resources provided by Cornell to support their various work responsibilities.



Faculty in 2010 were most satisfied with classrooms and the space provided for research, labs and studios, and, in overall terms, with the resources provided to support their teaching and research/scholarship responsibilities.

They were least satisfied with more specific forms of support for their research: support for securing grants, bridging funds, funding for incidental costs related to scholarship, and funding for graduate students. These items all had mean scores below 3 (where 3 represents “neither satisfied nor dissatisfied”).

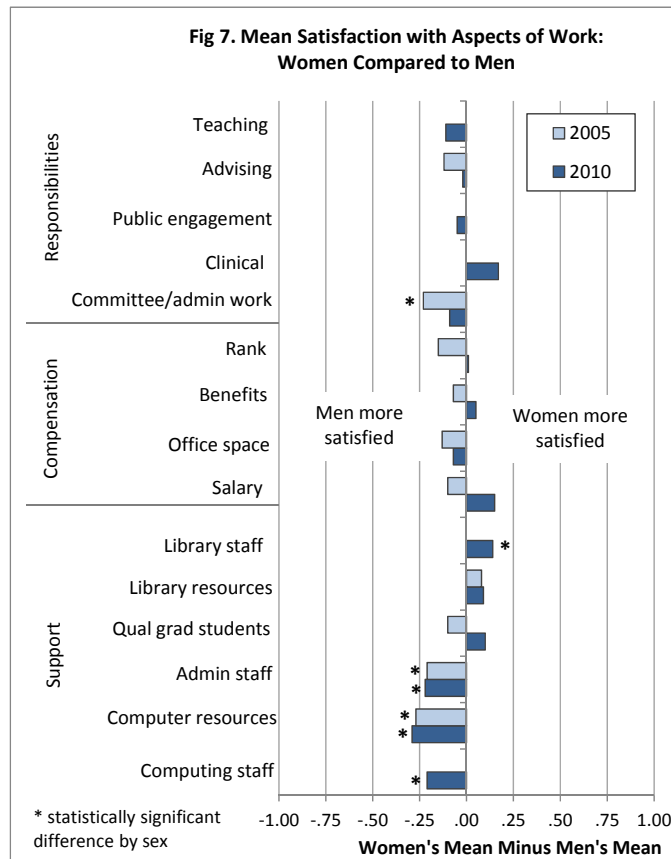
Comparing satisfaction scores from 2005 and 2010, the largest difference was associated with “space for graduate students” and “classroom space” with 2010 faculty being *more* satisfied. Faculty in 2010 were comparatively *less satisfied* with “technical and research staff.” Remaining differences between 2005 and 2010 satisfaction scores did not exceed one-fifth of a point on our five-point response scale.

## Satisfaction with Work Responsibilities and Resources by Gender

A comparison of faculty satisfaction with specific aspects of their work and the resources provided by Cornell to support that work reveals differences by gender. With few exceptions, women reported lower satisfaction than men. But overall, compared to 2005 FWL results, there were smaller gender-based differences among 2010 respondents on these satisfaction measures.

### *Work responsibilities: Women compared to men*

Figure 7 shows the difference in women's mean satisfaction with their work responsibilities relative to the associated mean for men. Values on the horizontal axis show the difference (women's mean satisfaction minus men's mean satisfaction) for each work aspect. Asterisks indicate mean differences that are statistically significant.



In 2010, statistically significant gender differences were observed for four aspects of work responsibilities. Men reported higher satisfaction on three items:

- Clerical and administrative staff
- Computer resources
- Computing support staff

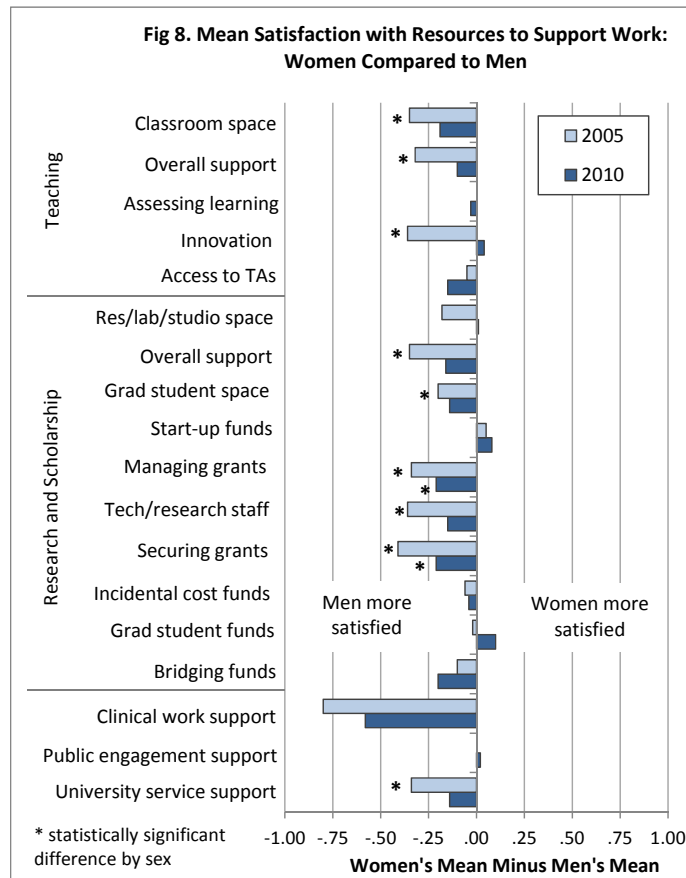
These gender differences were also observed in the 2005 FWL results. In addition, in the 2005 survey administration, men were significantly more satisfied than women with their committee and administrative responsibilities.

Women were significantly more satisfied than men with one aspect of their work responsibilities:

- Support provided by library staff

*Resources to support work responsibilities: Women compared to men*

Figure 8 shows the difference in women’s mean satisfaction with the resources provided to support their work responsibilities relative to mean satisfaction for men.



In both survey years, the largest observed gender difference concerned satisfaction with resources provided to support clinical work; however, with just 32 faculty answering this question in 2010 and 22 faculty answering it in 2005, the difference in mean scores was not statistically significant. Among our 2010 respondents, there were significant gender differences on just two items, both favoring men:

- Support for securing grants
- Support for managing grants and/or research accounts

Gender differences in satisfaction with these aspects of research support were also found in our 2005 results but the absolute difference in mean satisfaction was larger in 2005. Further, a number of large and statistically significant gender differences in satisfaction observed in the 2005 data were smaller and no longer statistically significant in our 2010 survey results.

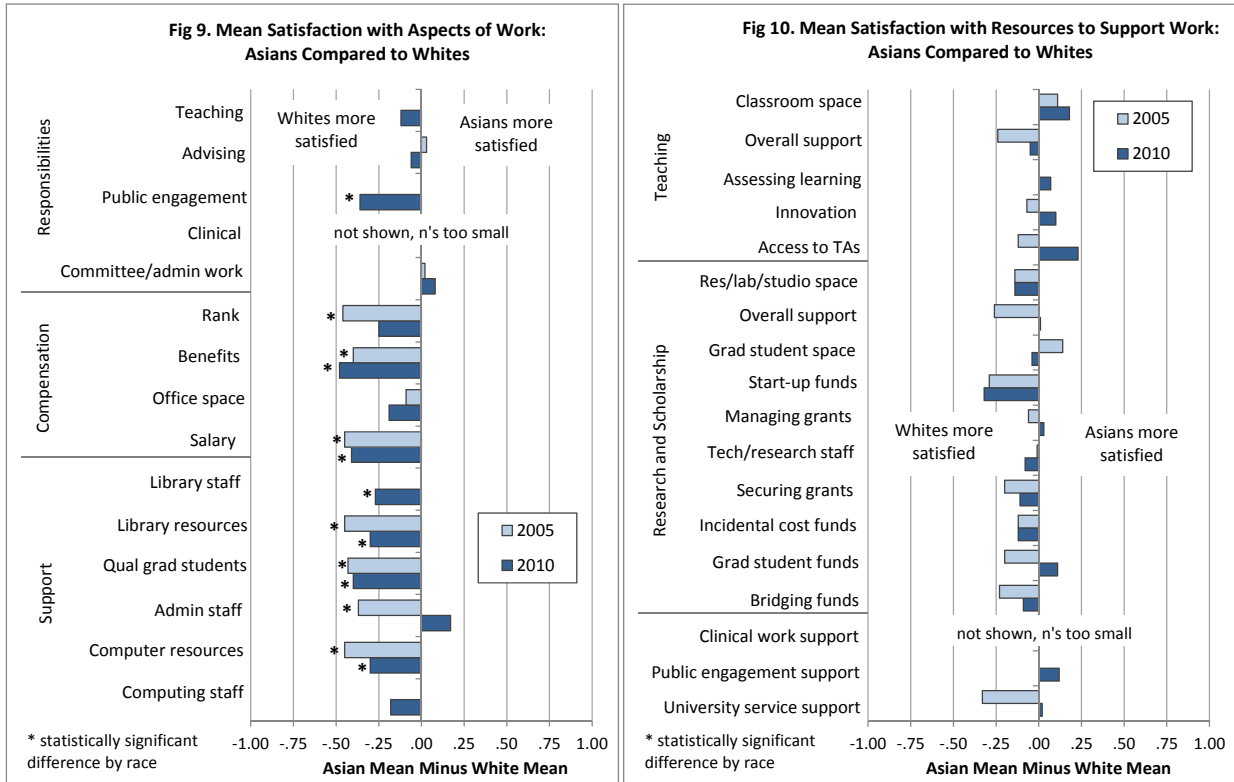


## Satisfaction with Work Responsibilities and Resources by Race/Ethnicity

Figures 9 through 12 compare the satisfaction of faculty of color with aspects of their work and the resources provided to support that work to satisfaction for White faculty. Asian faculty were less satisfied than White faculty with many aspects of work-related responsibilities and resources; but overall, gaps in Asian-White satisfaction were smaller in 2010 than in 2005. In contrast, for URM faculty in 2010, there were larger gaps in mean satisfaction compared to Whites than were observed in our 2005 survey results.

### Asian Faculty Compared to White Faculty

Figures 9 and 10 show the difference in Asian faculty members' mean satisfaction with their work responsibilities and the resources provided to support those responsibilities relative to White faculty.



Asian faculty reported lower satisfaction than their White faculty peers for many of the work-related responsibilities and resources shown in these figures. Among our 2010 survey respondents, statistically significant differences in satisfaction were observed for seven items, all favoring White faculty:

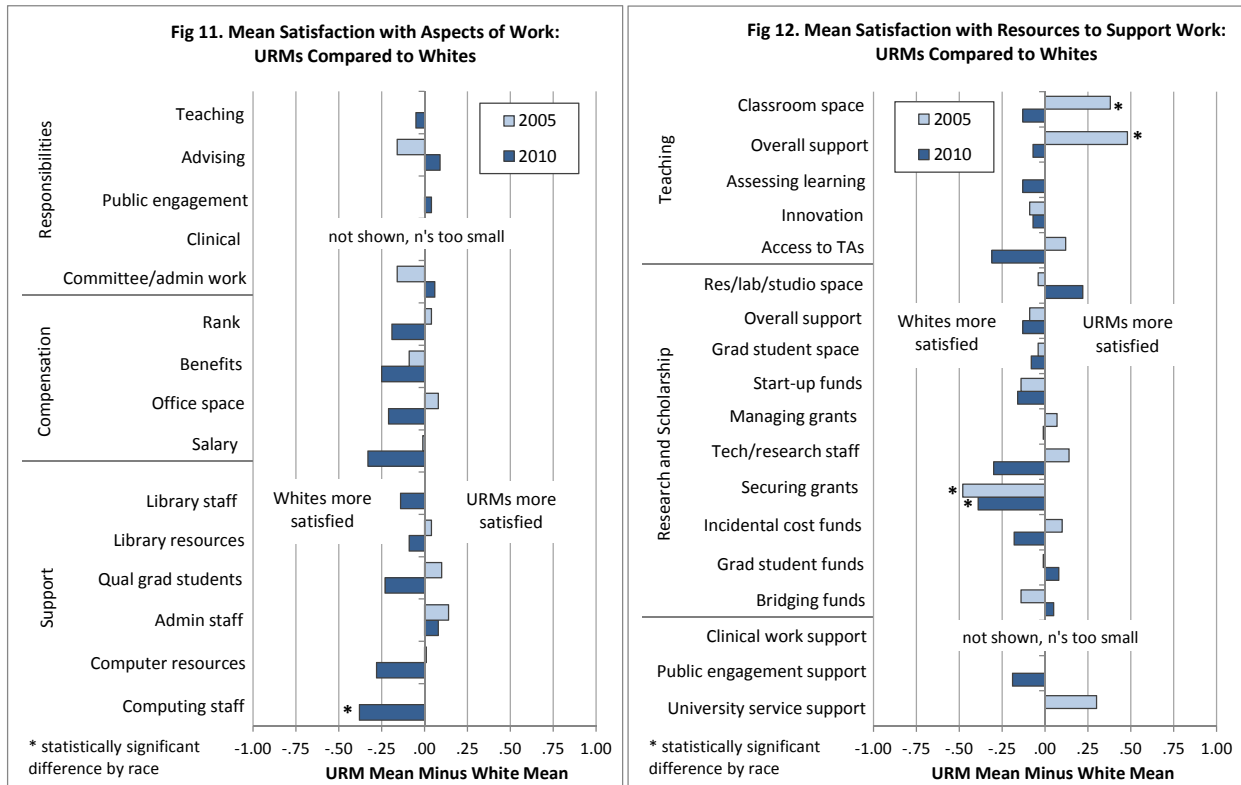
- Public engagement responsibilities
- Current salary
- Benefits package
- Library resources
- Library staff
- Computer resources
- Quality of graduate students

For most items, the satisfaction gap between Asian and White faculty seen in 2010 was slightly smaller than was observed in 2005; satisfaction with benefits and start-up funds are exceptions to this general pattern.

For several work aspects, the mean satisfaction of Asian faculty was *higher* than that reported by White faculty in 2010, including: committee and administrative responsibilities; clerical and administrative staff; funding for graduate students; and resources provided to support teaching responsibilities (e.g., classroom space, access to TAs, and support for teaching innovation and assessing student learning). None of these mean differences was statistically significant.

### URM Faculty Compared to White Faculty

Figures 11 and 12 show the difference in URM faculty members' mean satisfaction with their work responsibilities and the resources provided to support those responsibilities relative to White faculty.



Under-represented minority faculty reported lower mean satisfaction than White faculty on most of the measures shown in these figures. The largest, and statistically significant, gaps in satisfaction for URM survey respondents in 2010 were associated with:

- Being a faculty member
- Computing support staff
- Support for securing grants

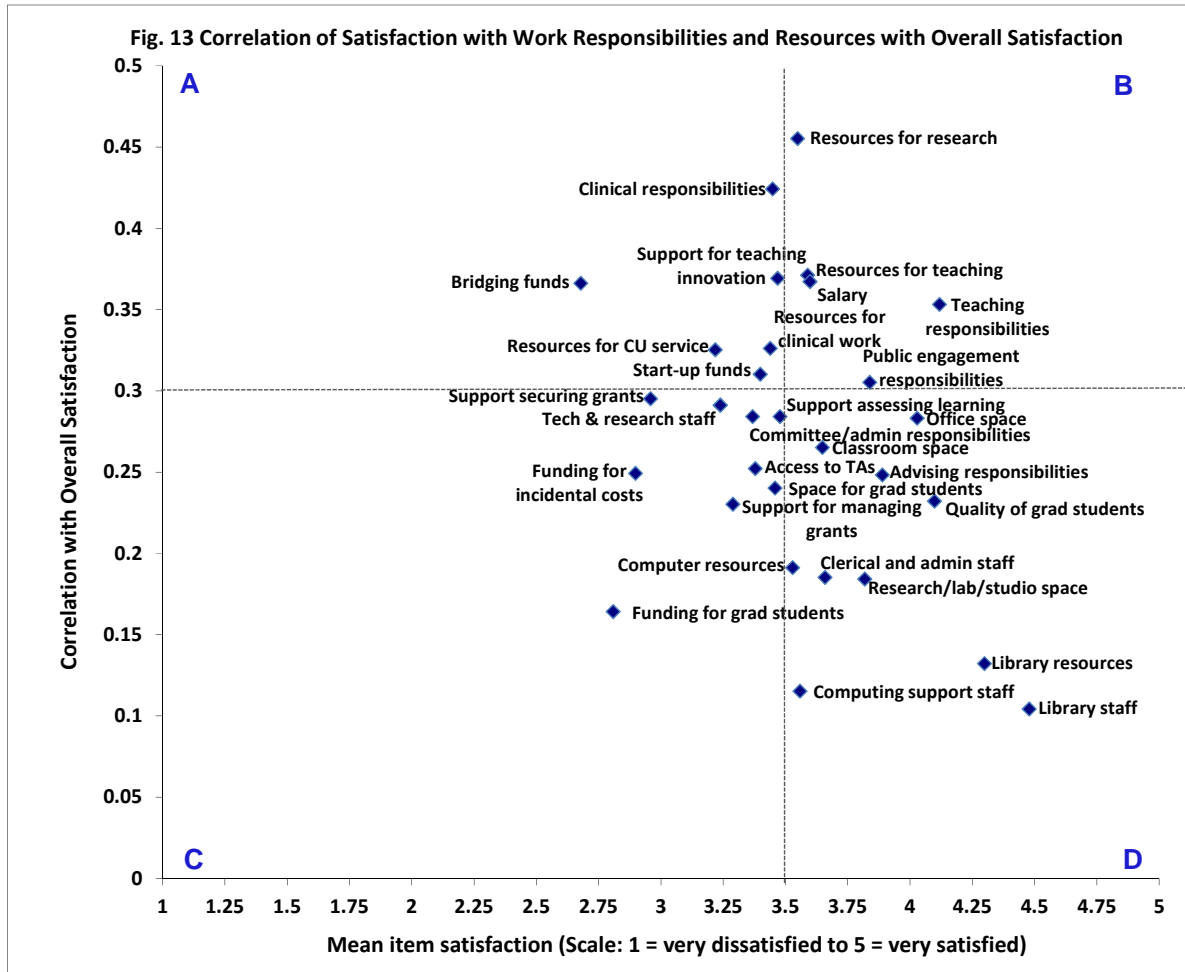
Compared to 2005 FWL results, there were larger race-associated differences reported by our 2010 survey respondents. While not statistically significant, there were substantial gaps (i.e., greater than one-quarter of a point difference on our five-point response scale) in URM faculty's satisfaction with aspects of their compensation in 2010 – current salary and benefits package – as well as with computer resources, and technical and research staff. URM faculty were less satisfied than White faculty with these work-related aspects in 2005 but the gaps in satisfaction are larger among our 2010 respondents.

In addition, there are several aspects with which URM faculty were substantively *more* satisfied than White faculty in 2005 but *less* satisfied than White faculty in 2010: resources to support teaching, overall; classroom space; and resources provided to support administrative and University service.

We also note there were a few aspects of work responsibilities and resources with which 2010 URM faculty reported *greater* satisfaction relative to White faculty than was the case among our 2005 survey respondents. The largest shift concerns satisfaction with research, lab or studio space; beyond this, positive swings in URM faculty satisfaction from 2005 to 2010 were quite small.

## D. Correlates of Overall Satisfaction

All measures of work responsibilities and resources are important in their own right but those with a stronger relationship to overall satisfaction are particularly important when seeking to understand faculty well-being. Using 2010 data, Figure 13 maps out the relationship between overall satisfaction with being a faculty member, and satisfaction with work responsibilities and resources provided to support work.



Values on the horizontal axis show mean satisfaction with a particular work responsibility or resource. Items appearing closer to the left side of this figure are aspects with which faculty are *less* satisfied (e.g., bridging funds and funding for graduate students) while items closer to the right are those with which faculty are *more* satisfied (e.g., library staff and library resources).

The vertical axis shows how strongly a particular aspect is correlated with overall satisfaction. Items appearing closer to the top of this figure (e.g., satisfaction with resources for research) have a stronger relationship with overall satisfaction than those that are closer to the bottom (e.g., satisfaction with computing staff and library staff).

Considering these axes together, the four quadrants group our measures of satisfaction with work responsibilities or resources as follows:

*Quadrant A:* stronger relationship to overall satisfaction, lower item satisfaction

*Quadrant C:* weaker relationship to overall satisfaction, lower item satisfaction

*Quadrant B:* stronger relationship to overall satisfaction, higher item satisfaction

*Quadrant D:* 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 faculty is comparatively high. These may be considered aspects of faculty members' work roles in which Cornell's performance is comparatively strong. This quadrant includes satisfaction with:

- Resources for research
- Resources for teaching
- Salary
- Teaching responsibilities
- Public engagement responsibilities

Items appearing in the upper left (quadrant A) are also strong correlates of overall satisfaction but for which satisfaction among Cornell faculty is comparatively low. In view of their strong relationship to overall satisfaction, these aspects may warrant further institutional consideration. This quadrant includes satisfaction with:

- Clinical responsibilities
- Support for teaching innovation
- Bridging funds
- Resources for University service
- Resources for clinical work
- Start-up funds