
Fostering Inclusive Department Climates

*Shawna Vican
Yvette Jackson
Pam Cook*

*Workshop for Department Chairs
Fall 2022*



UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
ADVANCE INSTITUTE

[*www.udel.edu/advance*](http://www.udel.edu/advance)

Focus of Today

1. Assessing Department Climate

- Definitions
- Key findings from UD data/research

2. Solutions

- Case studies
- Your own experiences

3. Implementation

- Actionable next steps
- Additional resources you may need

In Your Folders:

- Case Studies
- UD ADVANCE resources to support your work

What is workplace climate?

Climate: people's shared perceptions of, and meanings attached to, experiences at work.

This includes:

- policies, practices, and procedures
- behaviors they observe being rewarded, supported, and expected

(Schneider, Ehrhart, Macey 2013)

Inclusive climate: individuals of all backgrounds “are fairly treated, valued for who they are, and included in core decision making.”

Benefits include:

- Reduced conflict in diverse groups
- When relationship conflicts arise, they don't damage unit morale

(Nishii 2013)



Elements of inclusive department climate

Fairly Treated

- Evaluation (appraisal, review, promotion)
- Workload & salary
- Faculty development resources

Included in Decision Making

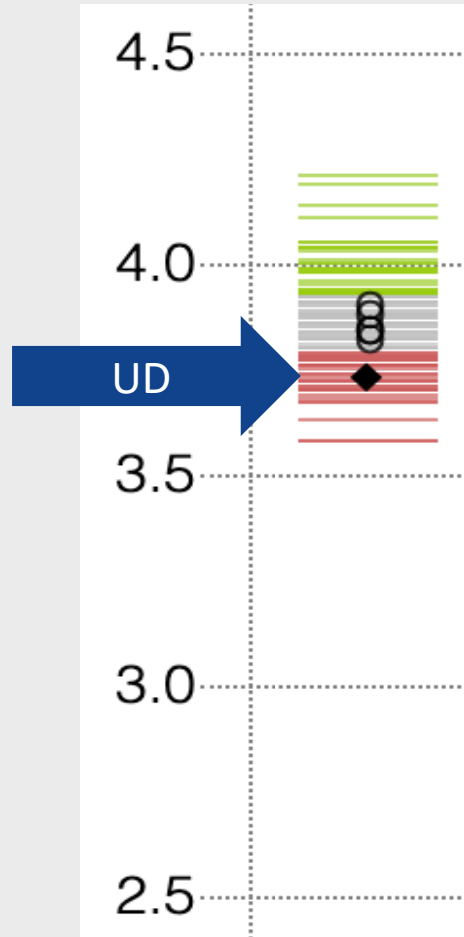
- Represented in leading decision-making
- Clear communication

Valued for Who They Are

- Contributions are recognized and valued
- Sense of community and belonging
- Seeing and accepting people's differences

*What else is important for
inclusive climate?*

UD COACHE Survey: Department Collegiality



What is Collegiality: multiple survey items measure elements of collegiality

Areas where UD lagged peers/cohort include:

- Department is collegial
- Colleagues committed to diversity/inclusion
- Colleagues pitch in when needed
- Also concerns around work-life & interaction with colleagues

Perceptions common across all faculty groups:

- Tenured & pre-tenure
- Men/women
- FOC/white faculty

COACHE survey results: <https://ire.udel.edu/ir/coache/>

UD ADVANCE Research

Quantitative

- Analysis of faculty data from UD IRE

Qualitative

- Interviews with current & former faculty (2015-2019 exits)
- Women of color oversampled (Black, Latina, Multi-Ethnic)
 - 20 current & 7 former T/TT WOC faculty (nearly 50% of population)

Today's Findings Supported by Prior UD ADVANCE Research

- 2014/2016/2018 UD ADVANCE Faculty Climate Surveys
- Path analysis of pathways to career satisfaction (gender differences)

Retention of T/TT Faculty at UD

- Over a 7-year window (2011 to 2017) UD lost 11 Black faculty
- Average annual count of Black faculty during this time period = 39
- This amounts to a 28.2% loss of Black faculty
- For comparison, among those leaving:

28.2% of
Black faculty

10.0% of
Hispanic
faculty

10.0% of
Asian faculty

6.4% of
White faculty

Of the 11 Black faculty that left UD, 8 were women

Source: Raw data, UD IRE

Research Findings: Department Climate

Chairs play a direct and indirect role in climate

- Consistent with prior climate surveys, interviews, and path analysis research

Women (including WOC) who exit frequently cite department climate:

“I would have said that the climate is chilly, passive aggressively hostile, with pockets of places where people are collegial” (R48)

WOC in *diverse departments* report relationships with chair and colleagues as key source of satisfaction:

“The university itself never felt like an especially welcoming place, but [my department] was an oasis” (R54)

Research Findings: Lack of Community

WOC report feeling isolated within their departments:

“We are so isolated and minoritized in our specific unit” (R41)

“I’ve gotten accustomed to the isolation. In the past, when there would be racial upheaval and unrest in the country, mostly people would pretend they couldn’t see me in the mailroom. But now [after George Floyd’s murder], people started emailing me [asking if I’m OK]. That’s never happened before...nobody ever cared if I was okay” (R48)

Women (including WOC) who leave UD frequently cite lack of close relationships with colleagues as part of their dissatisfaction with department climate

Leaders of/for Change

The chair is central to key aspects of departmental climate (for all faculty)

- Setting an example for collegiality
- Ensuring resources are equitably distributed
- Engaging in clear communication & transparent decision making
- Helping people become integrated into the department

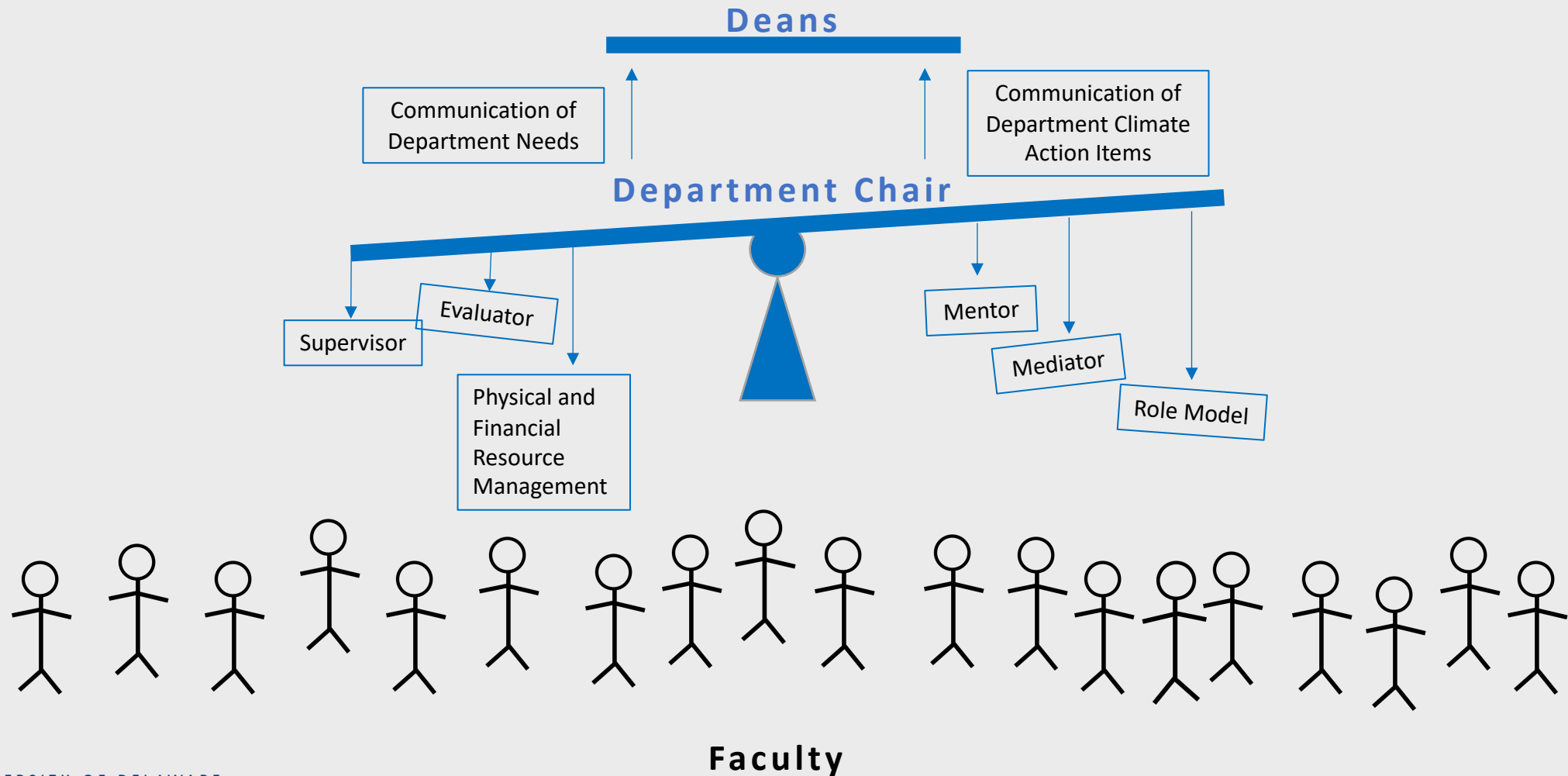
Leaders impact the degree to which people feel valued (key for retention)

“The department chair is the most important person in faculty life” (R5)

“My chair had a vision of wanting to make the department a better department. He spent a lot of time caring about... the faculty” (R38)



Chairs Have Many Roles



Case Study 1

- What did you notice about this scenario?
- What might the chair have done better here?
- How can the chair (and the faculty) work to change the pattern of interactions, and tone of these interactions, among faculty?
- Imagine that the venue had been a department seminar with graduate students present. The department chair introduces several of the faculty to the speaker, but not Maria.
 - What might the effect be on the students, especially Maria's students?

Case Study 2

- What, if anything, went wrong here?
- How do you think Helen felt during this exchange?
- What could/should the chair have done differently?
- **Would your department address disrespectful behavior of this sort? How?**

Group Discussion

Now let's discuss your own experiences with department climate:

What are your biggest challenges when it comes to department climate?

What strategies have you tried for fostering an inclusive climate? *Did this work?*

What resources do you need to improve departmental climate?

Next Steps

Some small steps we can take, starting tomorrow, within our department?

- Practice “management by walking about”
- Take groups of faculty to lunch and vary the groups to allow for more interactions
- Prepare a response for when a faculty member is disrespectful to colleagues
- Provide opportunities for faculty accomplishments/successes to be shared.

Which strategy feels most important for your department?

What will you commit to doing this semester?

Wrap Up

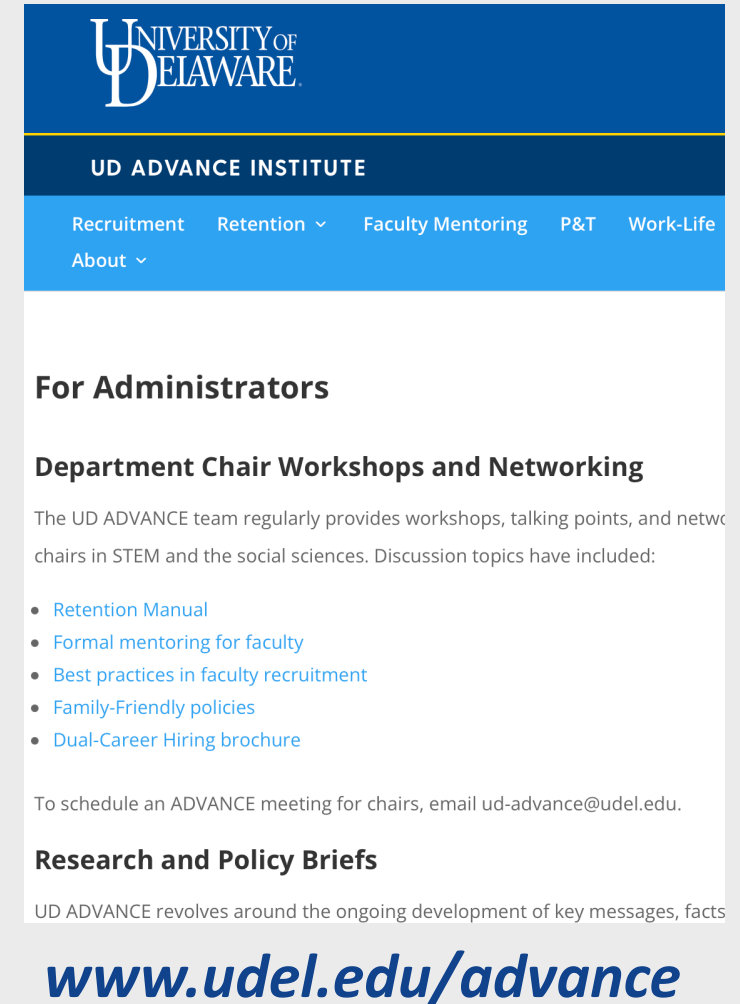
Follow Up

- ADVANCE: synthesize ideas from today's discussion and workshops in other colleges. Share new resources.
- Chairs: [Engage others in your department in conversations about climate.](#)

How can ADVANCE support you in your role as chair?

- Additional resources (documents, workshops, etc.)
- Data & research

Current Research: P&T process & 2-/4-year peer review



The screenshot shows the University of Delaware ADVANCE Institute website. The header features the University of Delaware logo and the text "UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE". Below this is a dark blue navigation bar with the text "UD ADVANCE INSTITUTE". A light blue navigation bar contains links for "Recruitment", "Retention" (with a dropdown arrow), "Faculty Mentoring", "P&T", "Work-Life", and "About" (with a dropdown arrow). The main content area has a section titled "For Administrators" followed by "Department Chair Workshops and Networking". The text describes the team's regular provision of workshops, talking points, and networking for chairs in STEM and the social sciences. A list of resources includes: "Retention Manual", "Formal mentoring for faculty", "Best practices in faculty recruitment", "Family-Friendly policies", and "Dual-Career Hiring brochure". A note states: "To schedule an ADVANCE meeting for chairs, email ud-advance@udel.edu." Below this is a section titled "Research and Policy Briefs" with the text: "UD ADVANCE revolves around the ongoing development of key messages, facts". At the bottom, the website URL www.udel.edu/advance is displayed in a large, bold, blue font.

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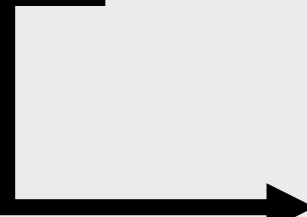
[Faculty Mentoring](#)

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For more detailed
recommendations
to promote faculty
retention



For Administrators

Department Chair Workshops and Networking

The UD ADVANCE team regularly provides workshops, talking points, and networking opportunities for department chairs in STEM and the social sciences. Discussion topics have included:

- [Retention Manual](#)
- [Formal mentoring for faculty](#)
- [Best practices in faculty recruitment](#)
- [Family-Friendly policies](#)
- [Dual-Career Hiring brochure](#)