

# **Report Of The Faculty Senate Ad-hoc Committee On Faculty Development And Retention**

**Kristin Bennett**

**Kim Fortun**

**Bill Francis**

**José Holguín-Veras**

**Linda McGown**

- ❖ On April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012 the Faculty Senate voted to prioritize different initiatives, Faculty Development and Retention (FDR) was the top priority
- ❖ On April 13, 2012, the FS' Executive Committee created the ad-hoc Committee on Faculty Development and Retention
- ❖ This presentation summarizes the work done

# Committee Charge

- ❖ Benchmark peer and aspirant institutions for their faculty development programs and practices
- ❖ Work with the administration to conduct a survey
- ❖ Speak with key members of the administration, both at the institute and school level, to gain a proper understanding of the issue
- ❖ Provide an overall assessment of FDR, and submit a brief report
- ❖ Organize a series of activities that the Faculty Senate feels is appropriate and have an impact on FDR

Process followed  
during the committee work

- ❖ After careful assessment of the constraints, the committee concluded that:
  - ❖ The committee should focus on the definition of a process conducive to enhancements to FDR
  - ❖ It did not have the resources to conduct a proper process of benchmarking
  - ❖ Producing a FDR plan should be led by Rensselaer's leadership, with the support of the Faculty Senate

- ❖ To ensure uniformity of the information gathered, an interview script was prepared to guide discussions
- ❖ Committee members met with Rensselaer leaders to gain insight into their views on FDR
- ❖ The conversations were very candid and cordial and provided a holistic assessment of FDR
- ❖ The interviewees were asked to identify what, in their opinion, were the most pressing issues impacting FDR, what they suggest to do to improve FDR, and the kind of initiatives (if any) that they have in place
- ❖ It is obvious to committee members that Rensselaer leaders are eager to contribute to enhance FDR.

Issues identified and suggestions received  
during the interviews

## ❖ Climate:

- ❖ Tense relations between faculty and administration
- ❖ Recognition of the inherent differences among the different schools in terms of scholarship and teaching
- ❖ Incentive and recognition of faculty achievements
- ❖ Not enough faculty input
- ❖ Dual career conflicts
- ❖ Failure to identify retention problems early, missed opportunities to address them.

# Issues listed as in need of improvement (2/3)

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## ❖ Nurturing/mentoring:

- ❖ A holistic approach to FDR (implementation of FDR programs at the various schools seems to be uneven).
- ❖ Leadership training for potential leaders
- ❖ Little training of academic leaders (Deans, Dept. Heads) on how to be effective leaders and how to foster faculty excellence
- ❖ Lack of formal mentoring programs and training
- ❖ Training on pedagogy and delivery methods
- ❖ Nurturing in general

# Issues listed as in need of improvement (3/3)

## ❖ Process:

- ❖ Clarity about the Promotion and Tenure (P&T) process
- ❖ Outdated Faculty Handbook
- ❖ Faculty input and participation

## ❖ Value/resources:

- ❖ Salary compression
- ❖ Technical and secretarial support
- ❖ Delays in promised resources
- ❖ Excessive workload

## ❖ Climate:

- ❖ Foster constructive dialogue and joint projects involving faculty and administration
- ❖ Support faculty initiatives
- ❖ Foster multi-disciplinary collaborations
- ❖ Implement a dual career policy

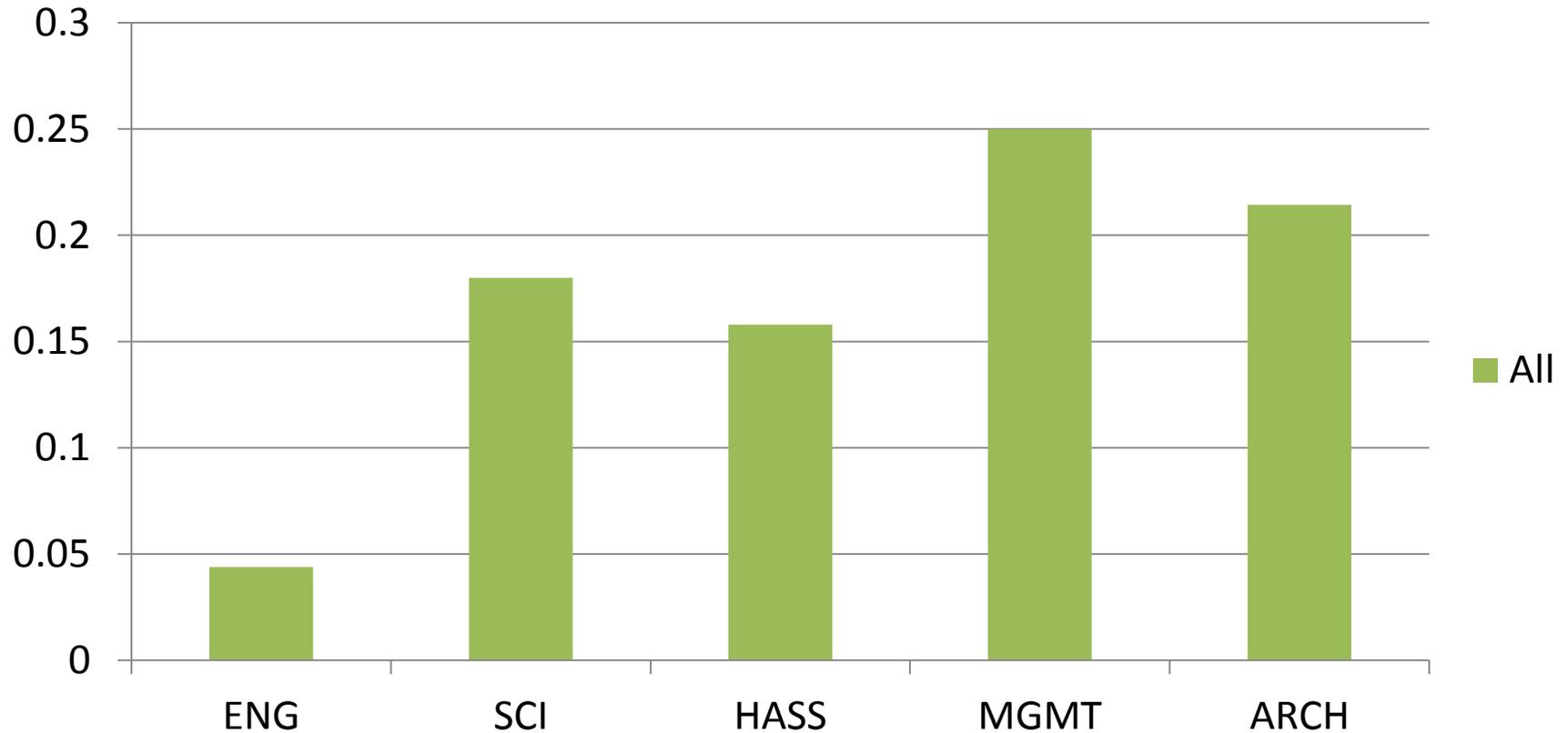
## ❖ Nurturing/mentoring:

- ❖ Put in place formal mentorship procedures across the Institute, which include a process to evaluate mentors
- ❖ Foster early identification of problems and barriers to success in P&T

# Suggestions received (2/2)

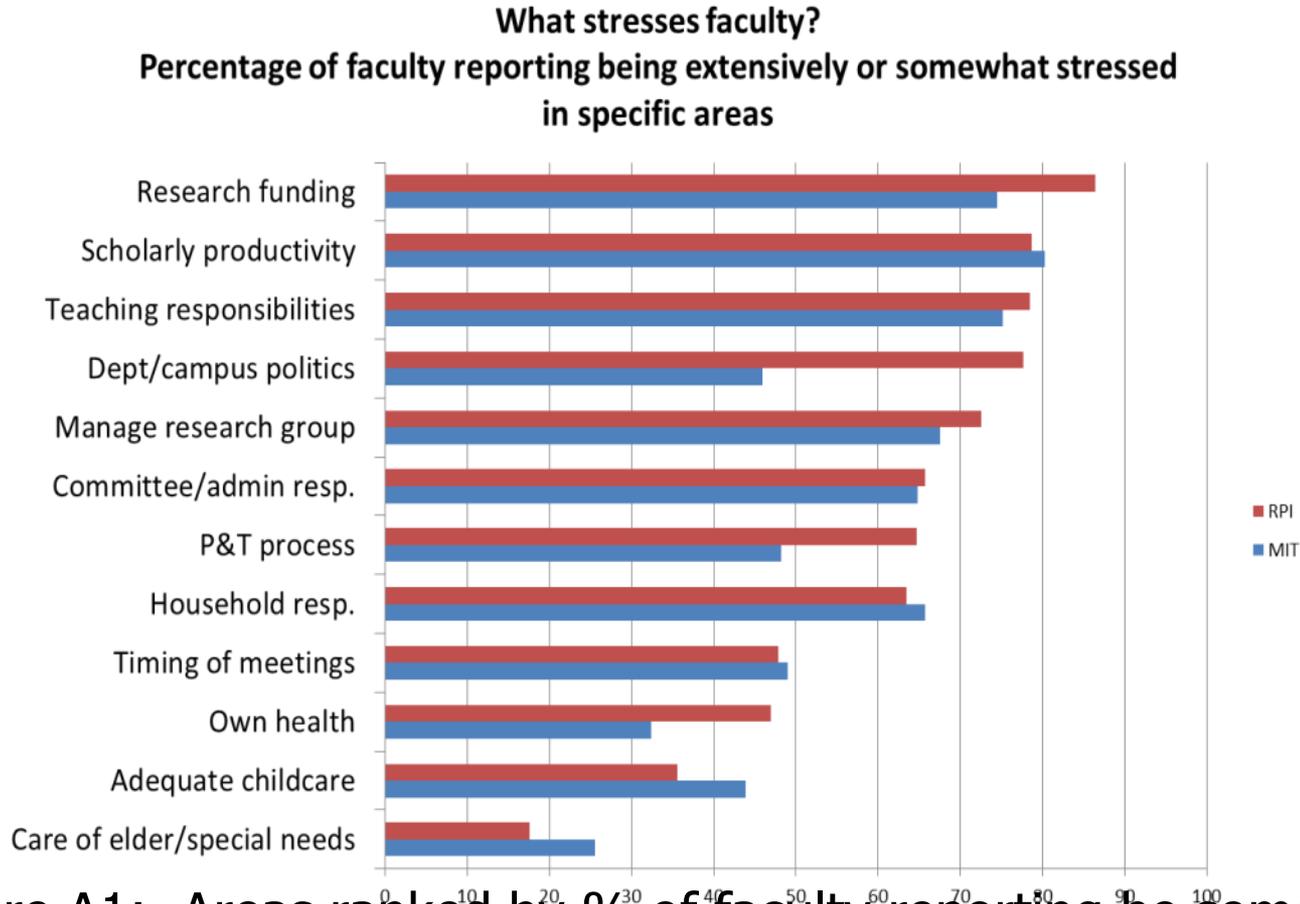
- ❖ Leadership/Peer training process:
  - ❖ Implement a clear tenure clock extension policy
  - ❖ Clarify P&T process
  - ❖ Provide training on P&T process for P&T committee members
  - ❖ Establish a faculty ombudsman and/or coaches
  - ❖ Leadership training for potential leaders
- ❖ Value/resources:
  - ❖ Provide summer fellowships
  - ❖ Provide sabbatical leaves
  - ❖ Foster dual career hires

## Denial Rates of P&T by School = F01 to S11



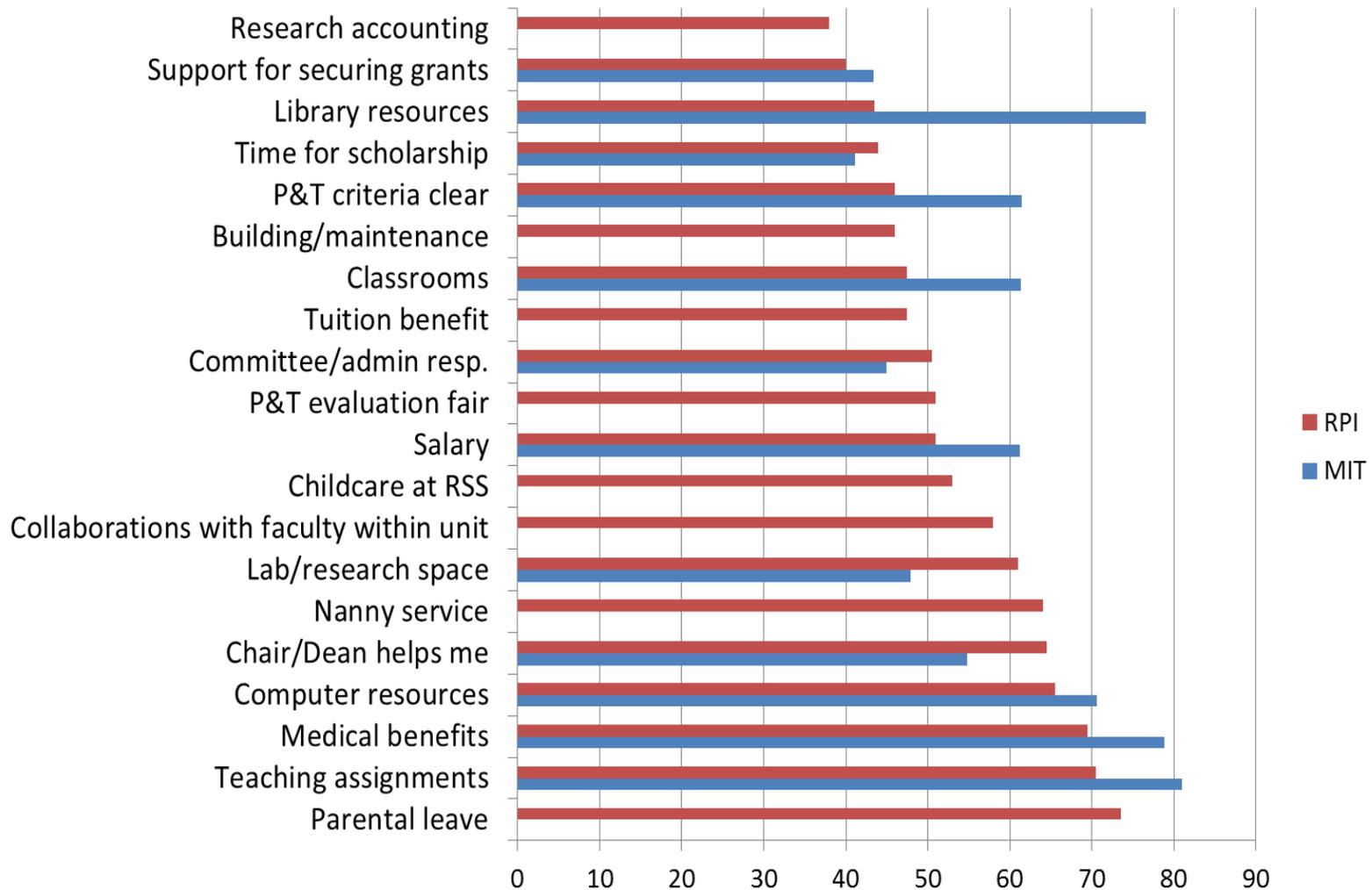


# RAMP-UP: 2008 Climate Survey



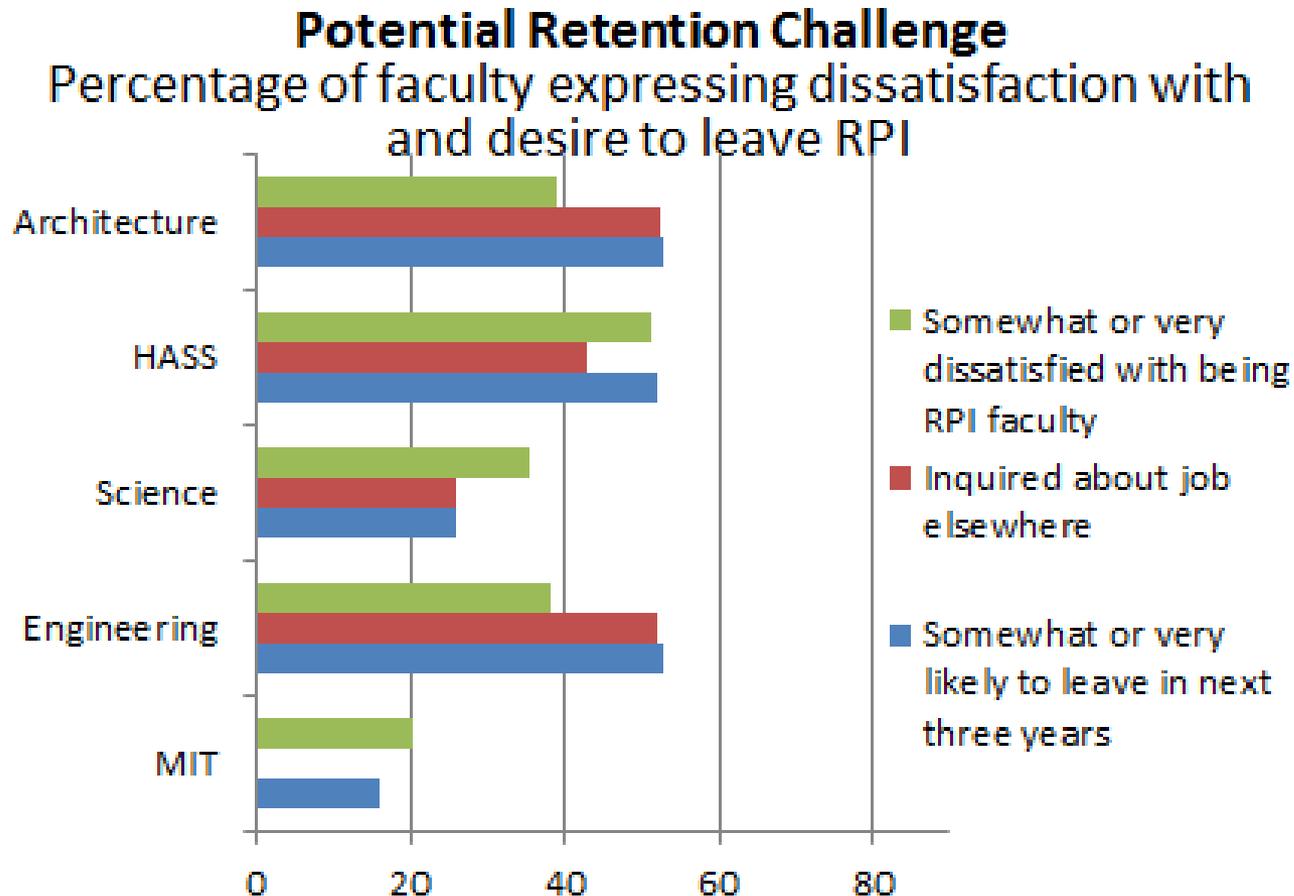
- ❖ Figure A1: Areas ranked by % of faculty reporting be somewhat or extensively stressed in that area. Faculty are more stressed by top items and less stressed by lower items.

# RAMP-UP 2008 Climate Survey: Satisfaction



- ❖ Areas ranked by % of faculty reporting be somewhat or very satisfied with that area. Faculty are less satisfied by top items and more satisfied by lower items.

# Support Facts from RAMP-UP 2008 Climate Survey: Retention Challenge



RPI overall dissatisfaction rate (40%) is much higher than that of MIT 16% Harvard <21% and Ohio State 25%

# Committee suggestions

# Suggested process

- ❖ Create a high-level Task Force, led by Rensselaer leadership, with the mandate of studying the issue, and crafting a FDR plan
- ❖ Identify perceived FDR issues through proactive faculty engagement by means of both faculty meetings, and a faculty survey
- ❖ Benchmark FDR efforts at peer and aspirant institutions
- ❖ Prepare FDR plan
- ❖ Consult with stakeholders and faculty
- ❖ Implement and revise the FDR plan

# Potential components of a FDR plan

❖ Some high impact initiatives that could be done now:

## 1) Tenure Clock Stop Policy

- ❖ Key to retention is early identification of short term issues—such as illness and lab construction delays—that can slow progress faculty progress so that they can be addressed in a timely fashion
- ❖ If appropriate, suitable tenure clock extensions can be granted
- ❖ Currently tenure clock stoppage is only routinely granted for parental leave, and extensions are granted for other circumstances on a case by case basis
- ❖ Could be part of Handbook revision.

Potential Draft Policy available on request

## 2) Dual Career Policy

- ❖ A positive climate for dual career couples is essential for successful recruitment and improved retention
- ❖ Clear and consistent policies are needed on
  - ❖ addressing potential conflicts for existing dual career faculty (such as faculty partners in same department and advancement into administrative positions)
  - ❖ how to handle new potential dual hires
- ❖ The former is not resource intensive and could be part of handbook revision.
- ❖ The later is resource intensive and would require institute resource commitments.

Potential Draft Policy available on request

### 3) Institute campus wide mentorship procedures

- ❖ Homogenizing mentorship procedures will help FDR
- ❖ Training mentors could be part of it
- ❖ Recognizing mentors in evaluation should be part of it.

#### 4) Improve P&T process clarity and consistency,

- ❖ Develop faculty-led training for incoming members of the P&T Committee on how to evaluate promotion cases in a fair and unbiased manner.

## 5) Create faculty-led mechanisms for FDR,

- ❖ Develop a faculty seminar discussion and panel series on achieving faculty excellence and removing barriers to excellence
- ❖ Develop a faculty-led multidisciplinary research focus group program to promote bottom-up development of research innovation and enhance RPI's collaborative climate

Questions?