

SECTION 3: PERSONNEL PRACTICES

Section 3 focuses on personnel practices and how they currently effect the creation of a socially just work environment through presentation and analyses of responses to survey questions and focus group information.

Hiring

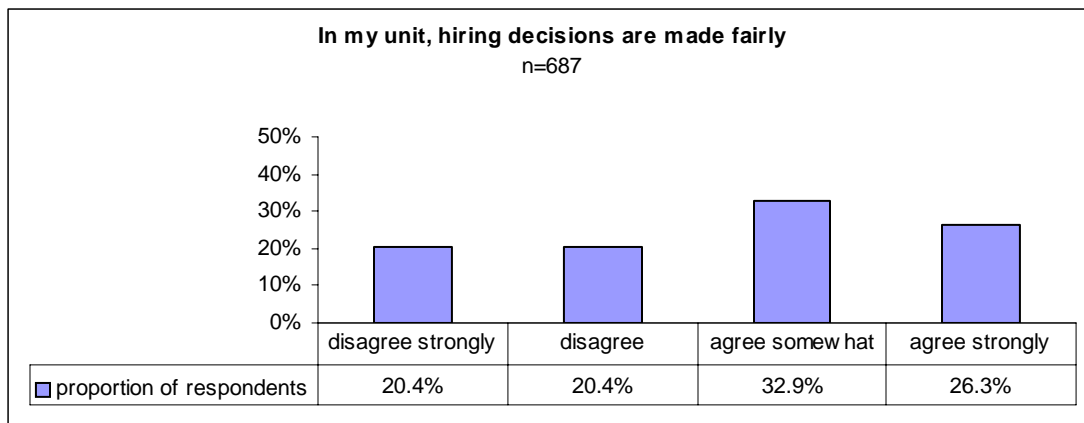
*“We look more at your qualifications for the job....
I think its very fair in my workplace. No matter
what diversity or disability.”*

Focus group participant

Most of the information on the perception of the hiring process is drawn from responses to the survey, rather than from focus groups. This seems reasonable for two reasons. One is that much of the hiring process is protected from public view by privacy rules and regulations. Another is that people who were not hired, for whatever reason, are not a part of our data universe.

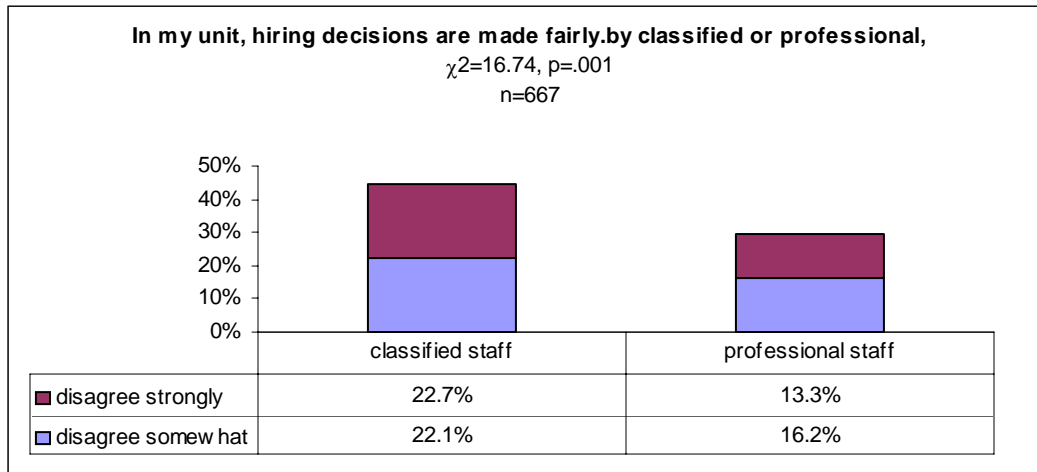
When asked to rate their agreement with the statement “In my unit, hiring decisions are made fairly,” over one-third of respondents (40.4%, n=280) disagreed “strongly” or “somewhat.” See Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1



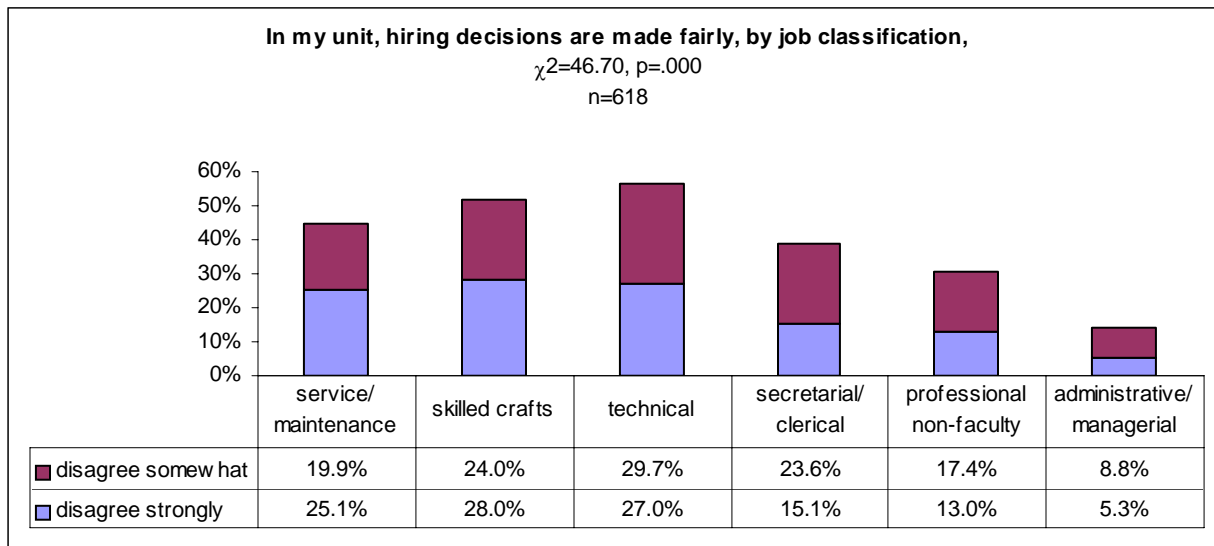
A more detailed exploration of this response indicates that perceptions of the fairness of the hiring process varied across several analysis categories. For example, classified staff were significantly more likely than professional staff (44.8%, n=221 v. 29.5%, n=51) to feel that hiring decisions were not fair. See Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2



When the same question was examined across job classification areas, there were also significant differences. Administrative/ managerial employees were less than half as likely (14.1%, n=8) as those in other job classifications to believe that there was unfairness. See Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3



People with disabilities were more likely than those without disabilities (30.5%, n=25 v. 18.7%, n=111) to disagree “strongly” that hiring decisions are fairly made ($\chi^2=12.61, p=.006$).

Whites were significantly more likely than people of color (41.8%, n=232 v. 28.8%, n=28) to express the belief that hiring decisions are unfair ($\chi^2=10.20, p=.017$). When further separated

by racial groups, 9 of 42 Asians (21.4%), 6 of 18 Blacks (33.3%), 4 of 10 Latinos (40.0%), and 232 of 555 Whites (41.8%) disagreed that hiring decisions are fairly made.¹

One possible explanation for the pattern of responses across racial groups can be discerned from discussion in the focus groups. They indicate a deep concern about the process of targeting positions, and a belief that people are being hired by “category” rather than competence. One focus group participant said:

“I had a former director who ran around and said ‘Do you know anyone Black who might want this job?’ “

A White focus group member shared the story of

“...a supervisor who said “I don’t care who you hire as long as it’s a minority.”

A woman spoke about what happened when she was in a position to do the hiring.

“I had an opportunity to hire, and because I’m a person of color, I’m not exactly sure where I was at or what I was doing, but I didn’t hire people of color. I felt that I would be judged.”

Other informants talked about the idea of targeting positions to be filled by individuals from particular identity groups.

“Targeting positions has never worked. We do not do a good job at recruitment.”

“...when they target a position for female or Hispanic female...if there’s a guy qualified for it he doesn’t have a prayer...it’s kind of unfair sometimes. I imagine that has to be done. It does seem unfair to someone who has been doing other things for a while and hoping for chance at that position... There should be some way of changing that so everybody can get in.”

From both anecdotal and statistical perspectives, it is clear that many UMass employees see hiring as an area where fairness of process has yet to be achieved.

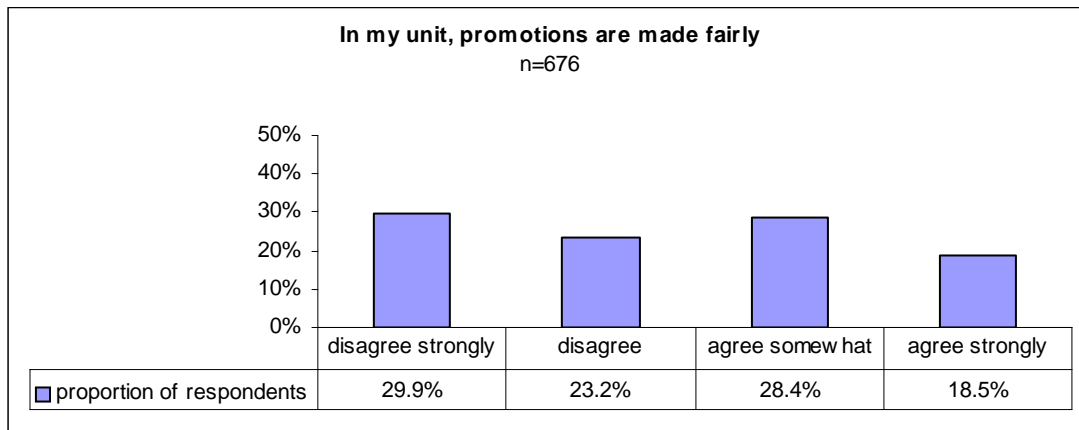
¹ Although not statistically significant, perhaps due to the small sample size of racial groups other than White, the pattern of difference across racial groups is deemed to important to exclude from mention.

Promotion

Hiring cannot be looked at in a vacuum. In addition to their economic importance, promotion policies, and the ways in which they are carried out, are important in setting the tone of a work environment.

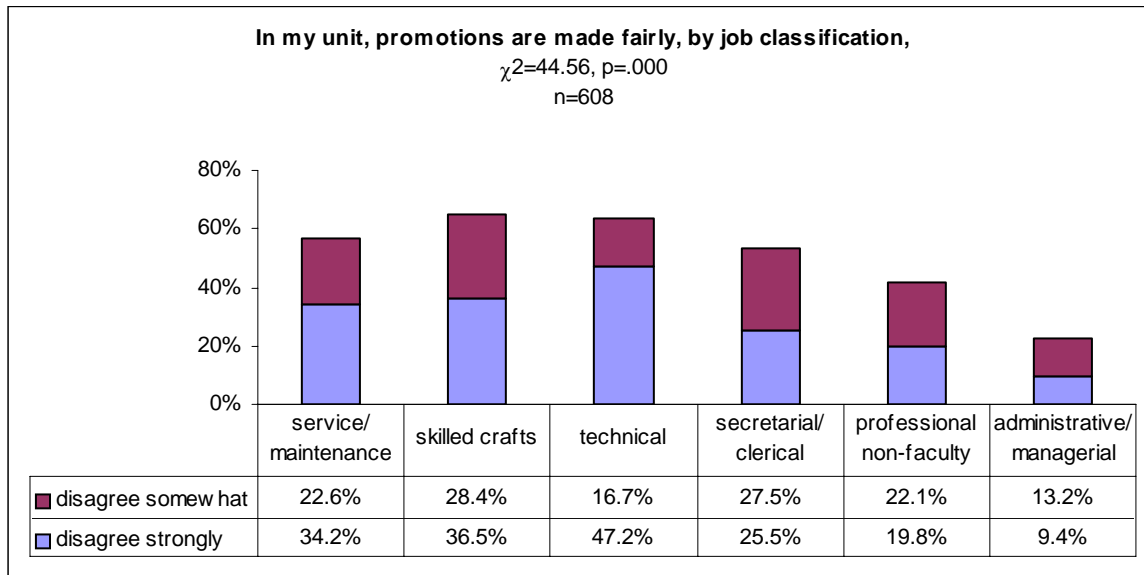
Over half of respondents (53.1%, n=359) disagreed “strongly” or “somewhat” with the statement “In my unit, promotions are made fairly.” (See Figure 3.4). A further analysis of responses to this question shows differences by various analysis categories.

Figure 3.4



Classified staff were significantly more likely than professional staff (58.2%, n=284 v. 38.7%, n=59) to believe that promotions are not made fairly ($\chi^2=19.13$, $p=.000$). When the same question was examined across job classification areas, administrative/ managerial employees were much less likely than those in other job classifications to believe that there was unfairness. See Figure 3.5

Figure 3.5



In focus groups, many classified staff expressed concerns about the limitations of the promotion system. One specific practice that was addressed consistently was a change from a 12- to a 14-step system for promotion. One employee said:

There's now 14 steps in the system instead of 12. Takes longer to get anywhere. System changed so we got less money over a longer period of time."

People with disabilities were significantly more likely than people without disabilities (62.9%, n=51 v. 51.6%, n=301) to express concern about the fairness of promotions ($\chi^2=10.95, p=.012$). When responses were tallied by racial group, 6 of 17 Blacks (35.3%), 15 of 39 Asians (38.4%), 5 of 10 Latinos (50.0%), and 297 of 548 Whites (54.2%) disagreed that promotions are fairly made.¹

Another pattern that turned up in focus groups was a concern about the promotion of women. A female informant said:

"But then you hit the glass ceiling, That's the trouble... We're not just going with what we tried to change in the last twenty to thirty years, we're also trying to tap into ceilings that happen at the upper levels."

Another focus group member reported that

"It seems that there's the White male up here that stops advancement, that doesn't attend to offensive behavior."

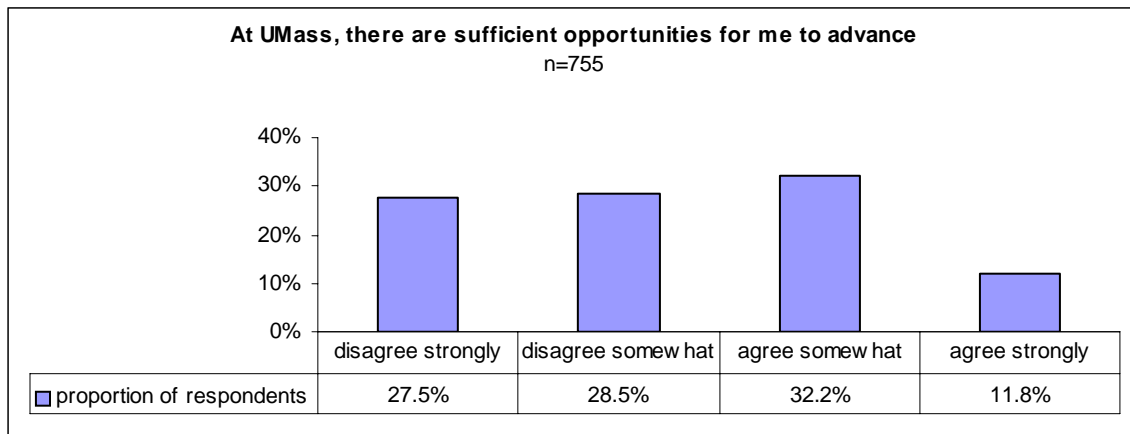
¹ Although not statistically significant, perhaps due to the small sample size of racial groups other than White, the pattern of difference across racial groups is deemed to important to exclude from mention.

A focus group member expressed another aspect of the complexity of the situation, extending it beyond UMass.

“But I think almost everyone in [my unit]...we tend to reflect the lack of diversity in our professions. I don’t know if there’s a woman who’s gay or not, and its certainly not visible. There’s been an overlay of professional culture indoctrination that covers up all of these diversities.”

Another survey question looked at a related aspect of opportunity within the system. When asked to rate their agreement with the statement “At UMass there are sufficient opportunities for me to advance,” over half the respondents (56.0%, n=423) disagreed “strongly” or “somewhat.” See Figure 3.6. Further analysis of the responses to this item showed significant differences among several analysis groups.

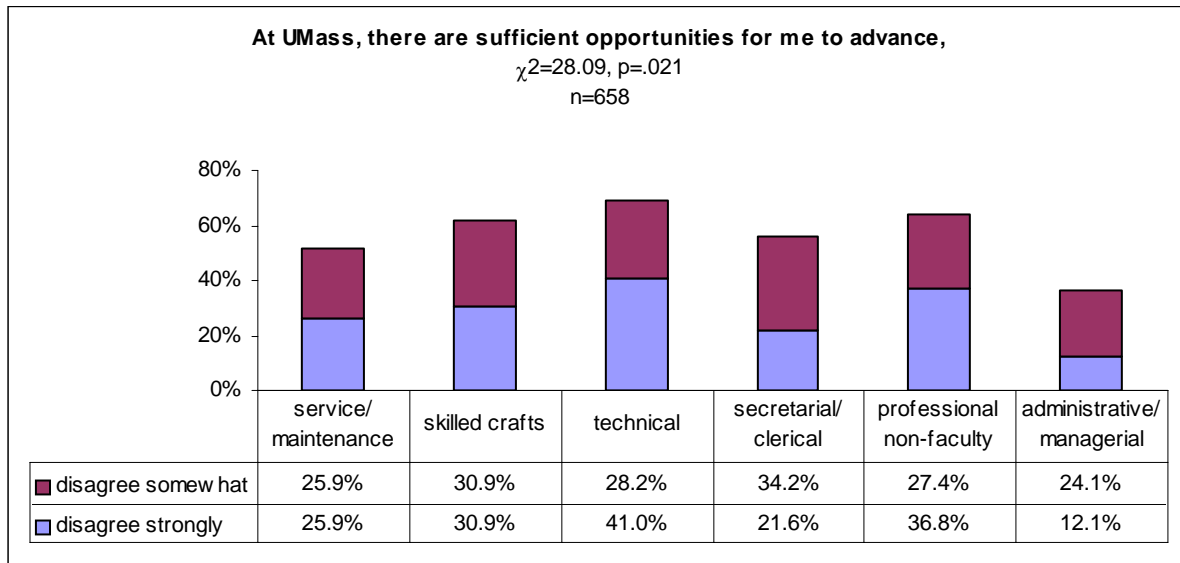
Figure 3.6



Men were significantly more likely than women (62.7%, n=271 v. 46.3%, 138) to disagree with the statement that there are sufficient advancement opportunities ($\chi^2=30.17$, $p=.000$).

Looked at by job classification, these data showed that technical employees were almost twice as likely as administrative/ managerial employees (69.2%, n=27 v. 36.2%, n=21) to disagree with the statement that there are sufficient opportunities for advancement. See Figure 3.7.

Figure 3.7



Looked at by work area, Physical Plant workers were most likely and Bursar's, Controller's and Procurement office workers were least likely (60.6%, n=203 v. 45.1%, n=26) to disagree that they had adequate advancement opportunities ($\chi^2=41.28, p=.005$).

Looked at by race, Whites were significantly more likely to disagree that they had advancement opportunities than were people of color as a group (57.8%, n=351 v. 44.8%, n=47) ($\chi^2=13.54, p=.004$). When people of color are further divided into racial classifications, 351 of 608 Whites (57.8%), 6 of 12 Latinos (50.0%), 8 of 19 Blacks (42.1%) and 16 of 43 Asians (37.2%) disagreed that they had adequate advancement opportunities.¹

Although not statistically significant, perhaps due to the small number of respondents identifying as gay, lesbian or bisexual, 13 of 16 gay, lesbian or bisexual respondents (68.4%), compared to 375 of 647 heterosexual respondents (58.0%) disagreed that there are significant opportunities for advancement.

It should be noted that patterns of response to this question are similar to those for the previous question about the fairness of promotions. (For example, see Figure 3.4, the proportions of respondents disagreeing with statements about advancement opportunities.) Responses in the focus groups were also similar on these topics.

One focus group participant expressed a skeptical view of advancement opportunities as they relate to existing job classification.

"This is where you come from. This is where you were. Regardless of where you move, the perception is '105911 010281C.9f reWtr TwTjmr isB mcation.

Another, even more succinct view of advancement through the lens of job classification was

“Once a clerk, always a clerk.”

A familiar theme that appeared in the focus groups was that of lack of advancement for women. One woman reported her view that:

“Career advancement is impossible. A woman will never go anywhere.”

Another felt that there was:

“Not much opportunity for promotion or career development. Trade off is access to training.”

A person of color expressed a similarly pessimistic position.

“Promotions or opportunities to advance are very limited.”

Promotion is clearly an area where the division needs work. More than half of respondents expressed concern about the fairness of and the lack of opportunity for advancement. Differences in job classification, work area, gender, and disability all compounded the concern expressed by A&F employees on this topic

Training and Development

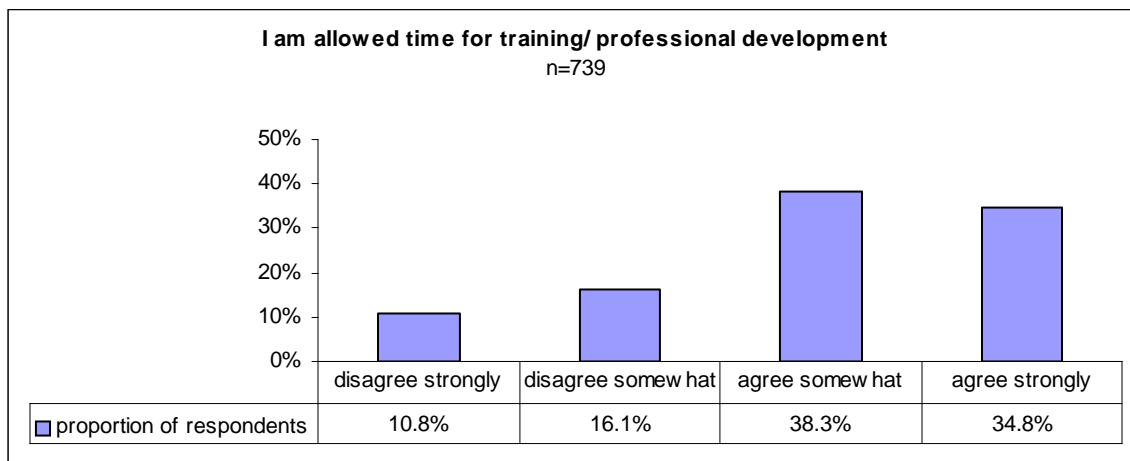
The survey included three questions that bore directly on the issue of employee training and development.

- £ “I am allowed time for training/ professional development.”
- £ “I have been given opportunities to participate in education and/ or training.”
- £ “I get the training/ professional development I need to succeed at my job.”

There are some powerful similarities and some interesting differences in employees’ responses to these related questions.

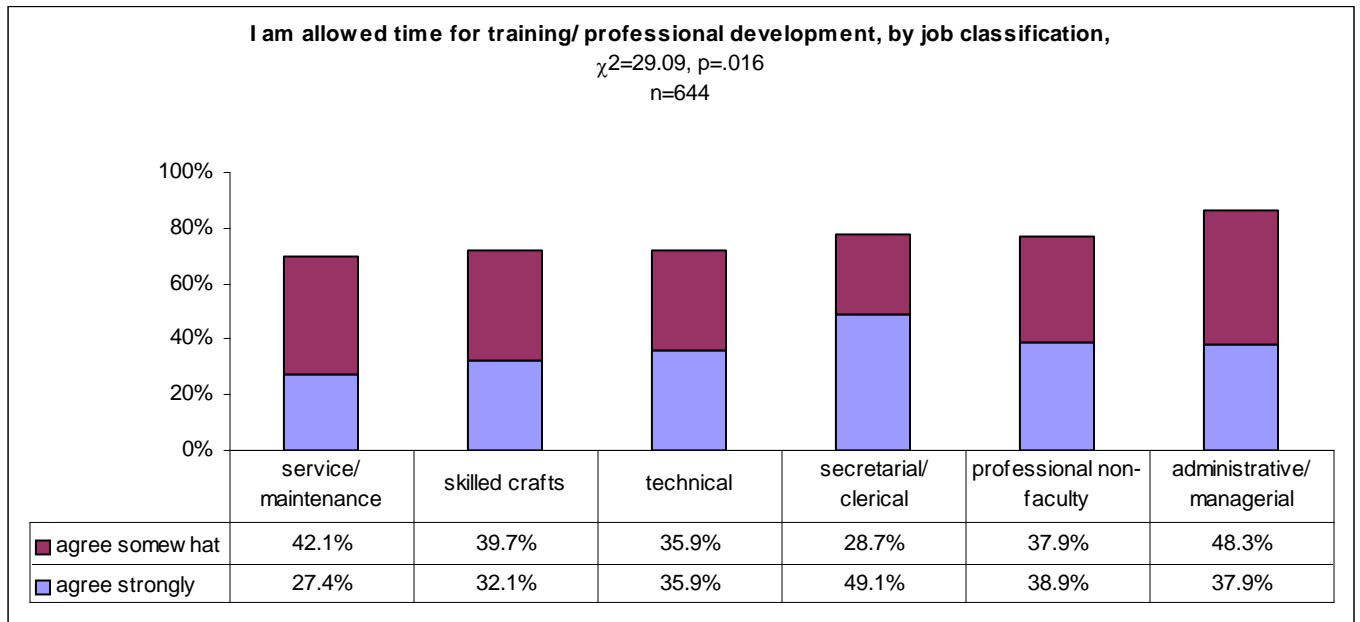
Respondents were asked to rate their agreement with the statement “I am allowed time for training/professional development.” Almost three-quarters of the respondents (73.1%, n=540) agreed “strongly” or “somewhat” with the statement. (See Figure 3.8) However, there were significant differences when these responses were analyzed by job classification.

Figure 3.8



Administrative/ managerial employees were most likely (86.2%, n=50) and service/maintenance workers least likely (69.5%, n=185) to agree that they are allowed time for training. See Figure 3.9.

Figure 3.9



Comments from classified workers during focus groups reinforced and clarified some of the differences among worker groups on this important issue.

“There are lots of little things like release time in order to go to training. Should be a part of your job...it's an extra hurdle.”

“Would like to see more access to training and ability to attend University classes. Schedule conflicts and work load make it difficult.”

“The way training courses are set up – they’re not available.”

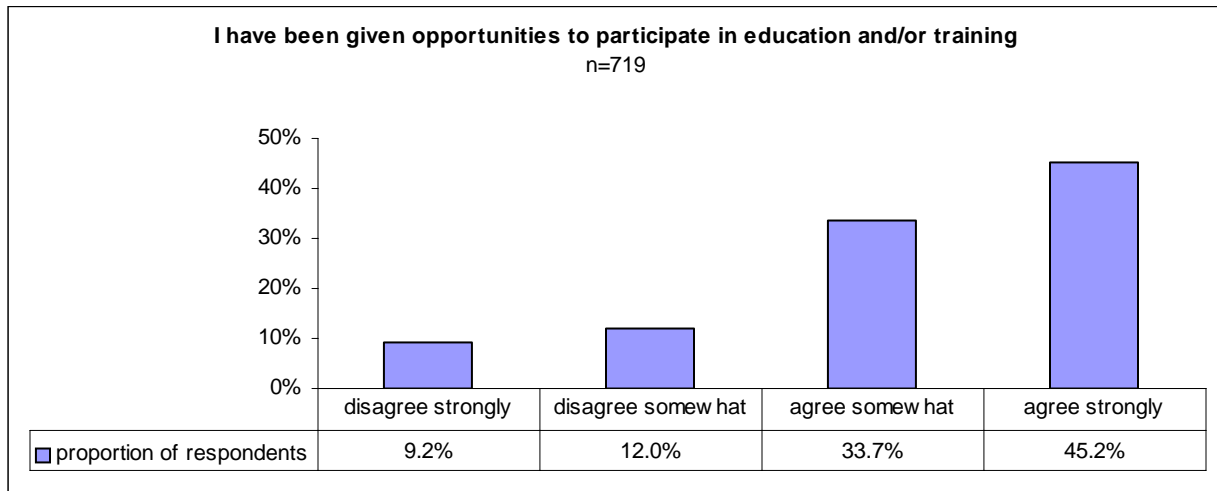
“We just can’t take off because there’s no one to take our place. Flexibility of time is non-existent.”

When tallied by racial group, 16 of 18 Blacks (88.9%), 437 of 595 Whites (73.5%), 7 of 10 Latinos (70.0%) and 65.9% of Asians agreed that they are allowed time for training.¹

When asked to rate their agreement with the statement “I have been given opportunities to participate in education and/or training,” over three-quarters of the respondents (78.9%, n=567) agreed “strongly” or “somewhat.” See Figure 3.10.

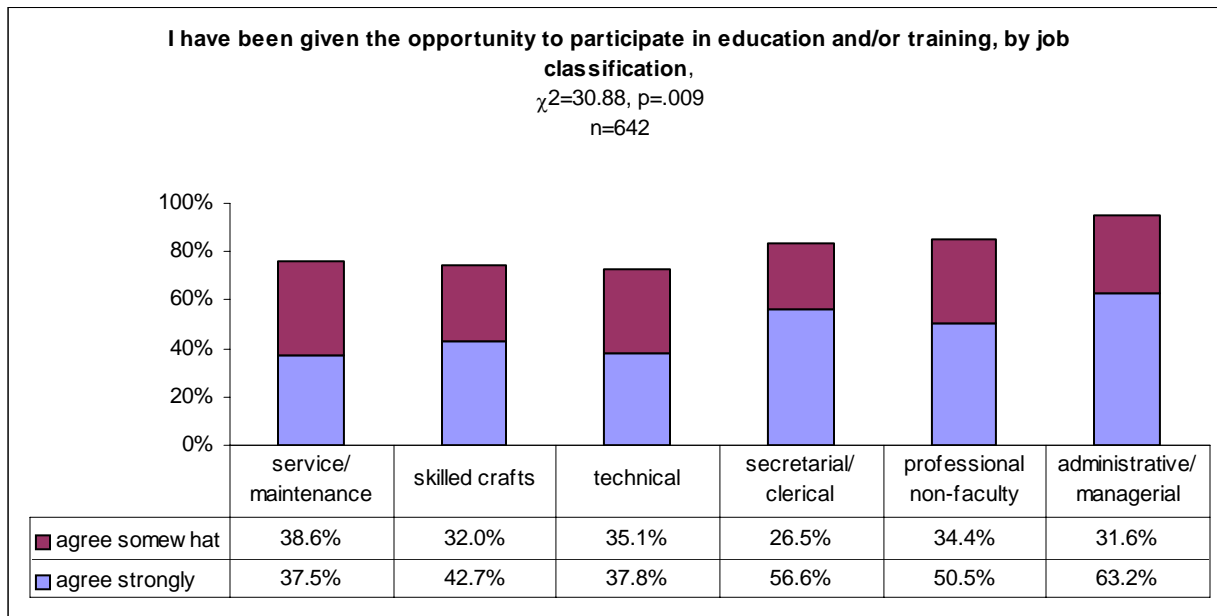
¹ Although not statistically significant, perhaps due to the small sample size of racial groups other than White, the pattern of difference across racial groups is deemed too important to exclude from mention.

Figure 3.10



There was significant difference across job classification areas, however. Administrative/managerial employees were the most likely (94.8%, n=54) and technical employees the least likely (72.9%, n=27) to agree that they have been given training opportunities. See Figure 3.11.

Figure 3.11



It was clear from focus group member's comments that training is a valued benefit. Many informants appreciated both the training and their supervisors' attempts to give them access to it, at the same time that they acknowledged the practical difficulties. A female classified worker said:

“On paper it really looks good, because classifieds are able to have access to training. Possibly you might be able to do something with your work schedule...”

Another classified worker said:

“My boss tries to give me what I need...access to training.”

A professional employee said:

“On the other hand, I’m compensated by having access to training. So if I have something that I’m interested in, I can go out.”

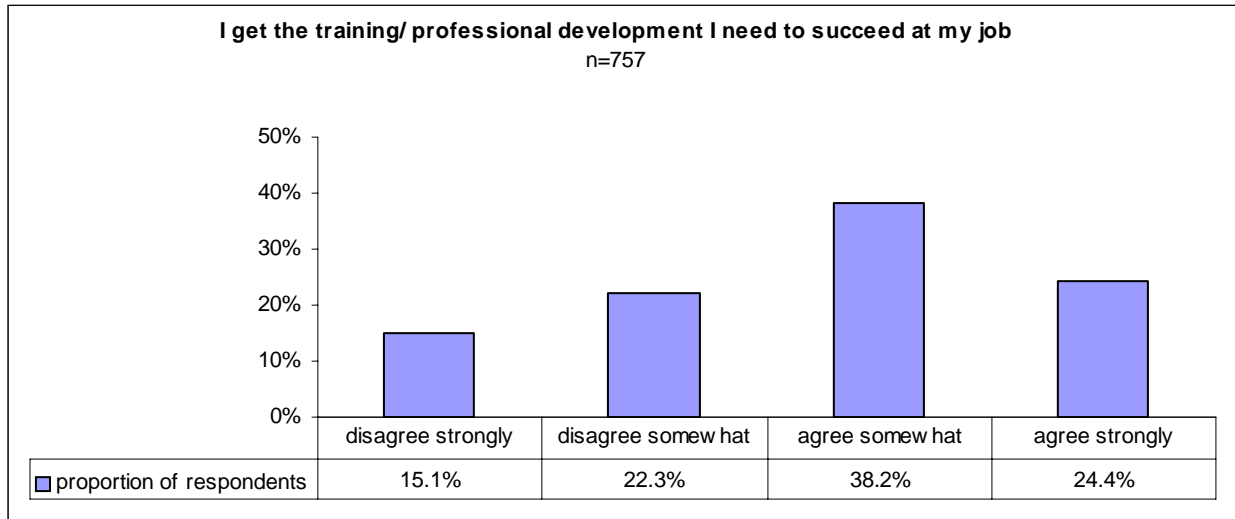
Access to training can be complicated by many factors. An Asian participant mentioned concerns about language:

“There should be more [training] provided and encouraged. Training in language in particular.”

When responses to this question were tallied by racial group, 15 of 18 Blacks (83.3%), 470 of 586 Whites (80.2%), 28 of 38 Asians (73.7%) and 8 of 12 Latinos (66.7 %) agree that they were given opportunities to participate in education and training.¹

The third statement upon which respondents were asked to rate their agreement was “I get the training/professional development I need to succeed at my job.” About two-thirds of respondents agreed “strongly” or “somewhat” that they get the necessary training. See Figure 3.12.

Figure 3.12



¹ Although not statistically significant, perhaps due to the small sample size of racial groups other than White, the pattern of difference across racial groups is deemed too important to exclude from mention.

A tally of responses to this question by racial group showed that 17 of 19 Blacks (89.5%), 9 of 12 Latinos (75.0%), 28 of 43 Asians (65.1%) and 369 of 605 Whites (61.0%) agree with the statement.

Focus group participants' comments showed a range of opinion about getting needed training. One informant said that

"Time available for training. It seems fair,"

while another commented that

"Inflexible work schedules prevent some from taking advantage of available training. Some areas [are] using [on-]site training in order to be more flexible."

A focus group participant described an experience which highlights how lack of access to training can flow over into many aspects of an individual's and an entire department's work life.

"Got reassigned but was never properly trained to do the tasks they wanted done."

Many employees see training and development as a benefit and believe that supervisors try to provide access to training. However, the ability of workers to access training clearly varied by job classification and individual work place constraints.

Rewards

Several years ago, as a result of division-wide CQI surveys, Administration and Finance initiated a rewards program called ACE (Achievement, Competence, Excellence), which is designed to offer both individual and team awards and recognition for good performance. While the ACE program is being used, different units have done so at very different levels of intensity and with varying levels of success. Comments from the focus group participants show a range of responses to the rewards program.

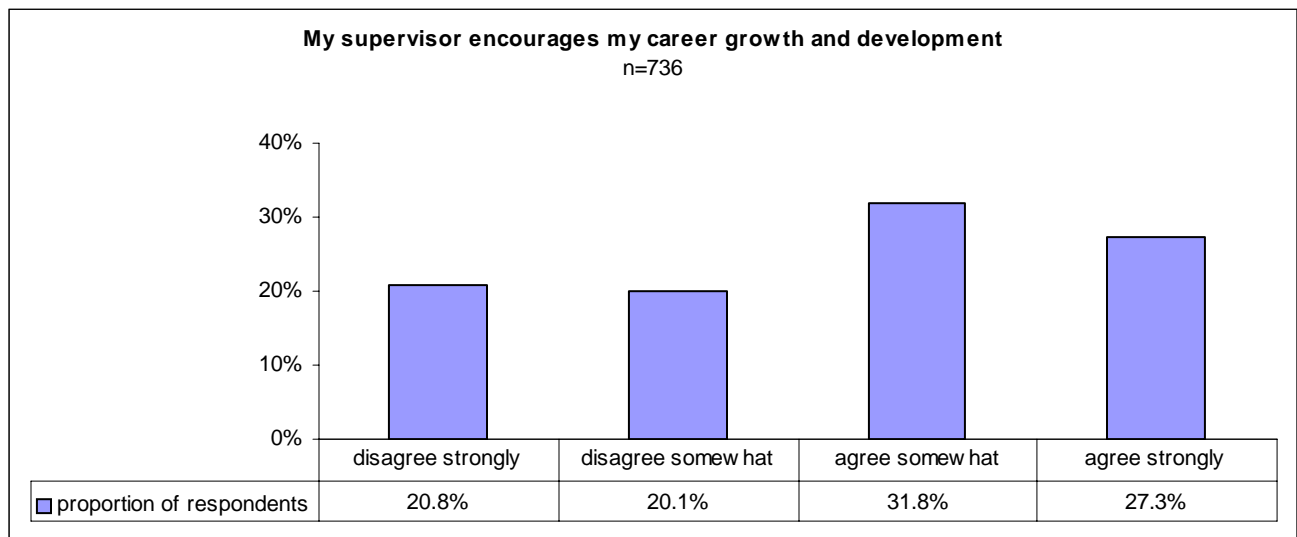
“Rewards and recognition of ACE are fair.”

“There’s a lack of ability to reward [in my division] because there’s no ACE program.”

“Rewards programs are confusing. When you see some of the people who get rewarded, you wonder.”

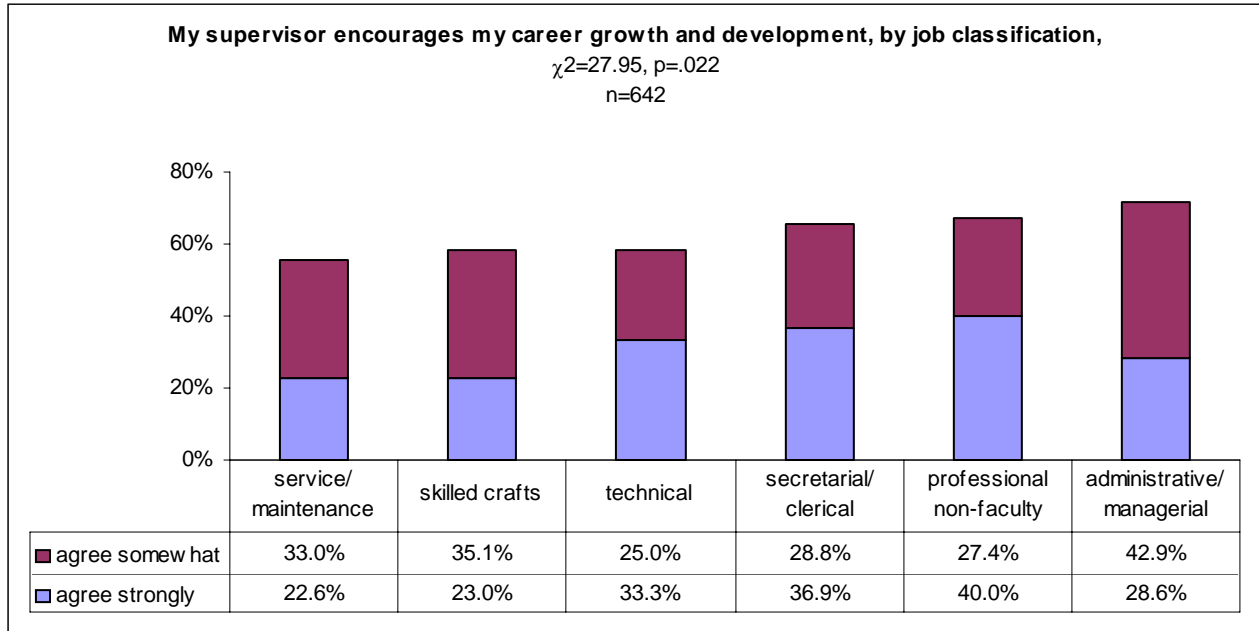
Another kind of reward for employees can be the kind of encouragement and support that they receive from their supervisors. When asked to respond to the statement “My supervisor encourages my career growth and development,” less than two-thirds of respondents (59.1%, n=435) agreed “strongly” or “somewhat.” See Figure 3.13.

Figure 3.13



There were significant differences in response patterns to this question when compared by job classification. Administrative/ managerial workers were most likely (71.5%, n=40), and service/maintenance workers least likely (55.6%, n=150), to agree that their supervisors encourage their development. See Figure 3.14

Figure 3.14



Comments from employees during focus groups were in line with the results of the survey question. In response to a question about the availability of recognition, one informant brought up as an issue

“...who gets coaching and mentoring for promotion”

while another talked about a personal impression.

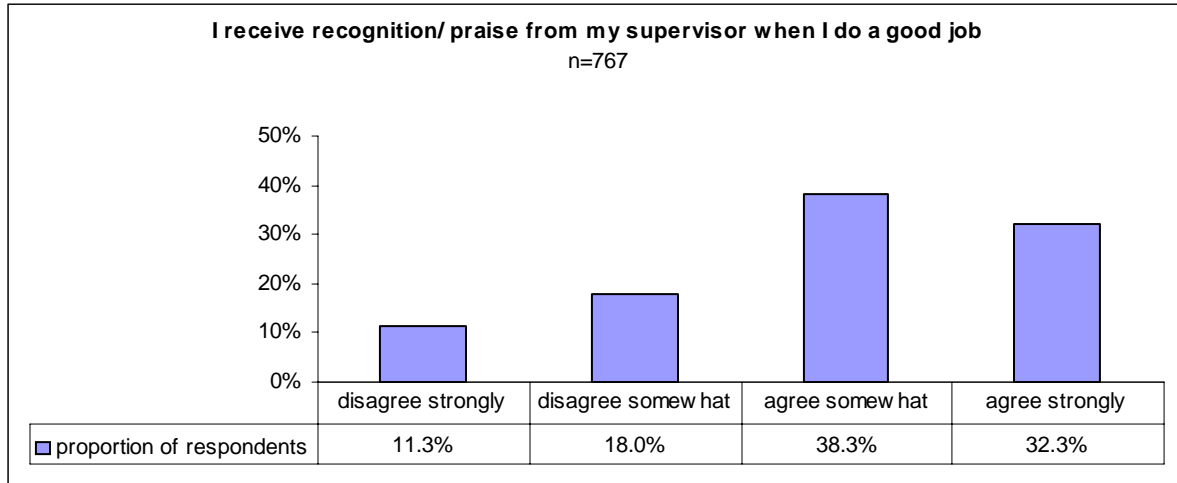
“I came here thinking there would be opportunity for promotion...it only seems to be for certain people.”

The sense was expressed that recognition was not equally distributed across the ranks.

“More recognition goes to higher levels of management.”

Respondents were asked to rate their agreement with the statement “I receive recognition/praise from my supervisor when I do a good job.” 29.3% of those responding (n=225) disagreed “strongly” or “somewhat” with the statement. See Figure 3.15.

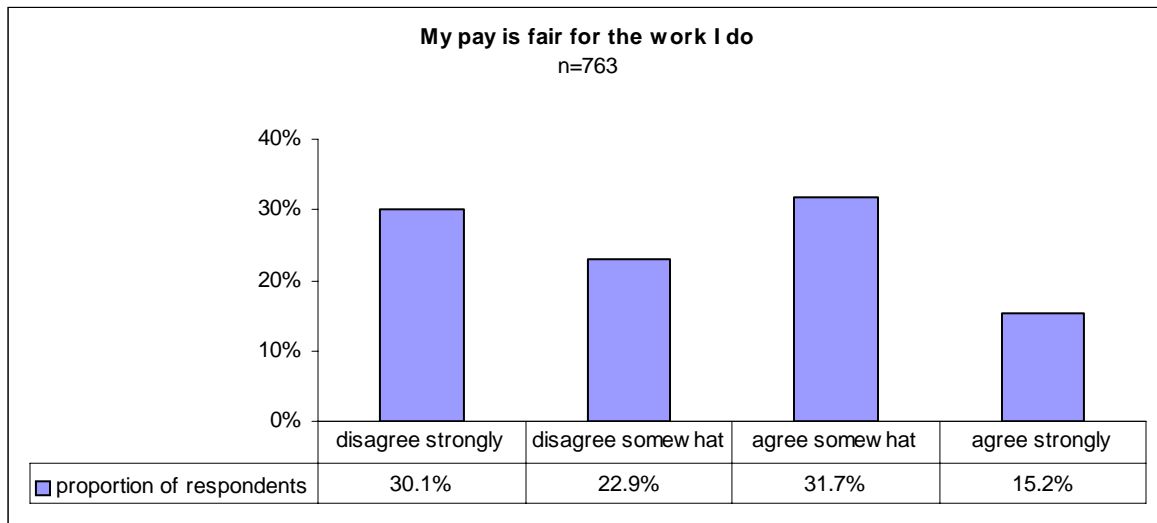
Figure 3.15



A tally by racial group showed that all of the Black respondents (19 of 19) agreed, as did 9 of 11 Latinos (81.9%), 434 of 614 Whites (70.7%) and 32 of 46 Asians (69.6%).¹

A central part of the reward structure is pay. More than half of respondents (53.0%, n=405) disagreed “strongly” or “somewhat” with the statement “My pay is fair for the work I do.” See Figure 3.16.

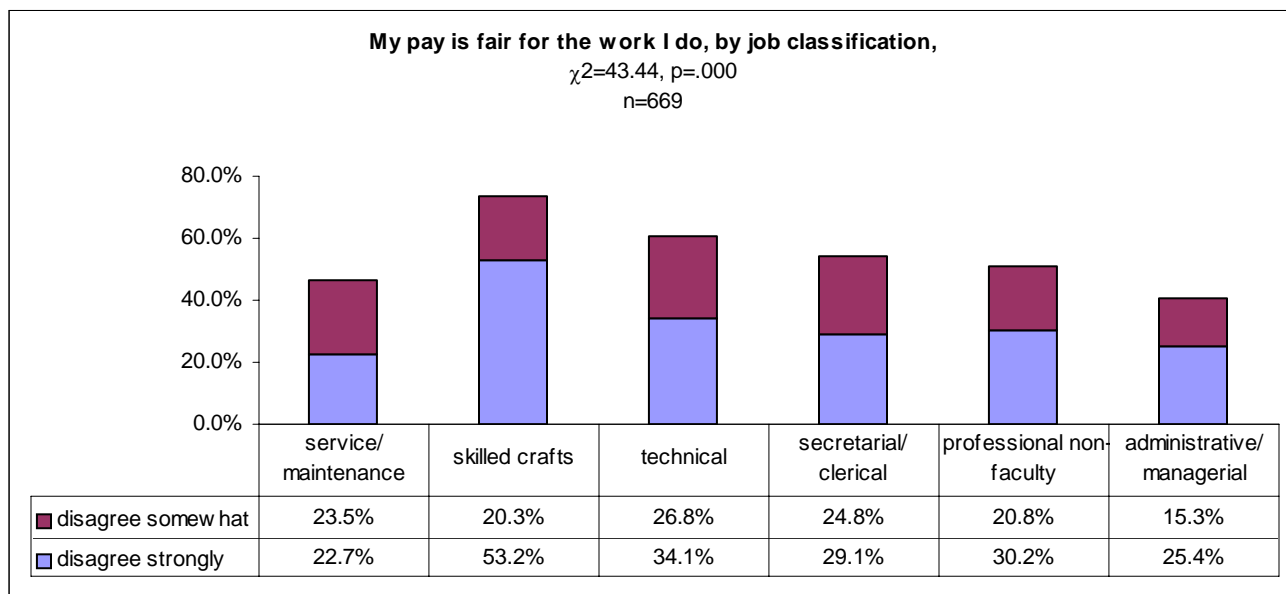
Figure 3.16



¹ Although no

When examined by job classification, these responses showed significant differences. Skilled crafts workers were most likely (73.5%, n=58) and executive/administrative/managerial workers the least likely (40.7%, n=24) to disagree that their pay is fair. See Figure 3.17.

Figure 3.17



An analysis by racial groups showed that 15 of 20 Blacks (75.0%), 330 of 616 Whites (53.6%), 5 of 10 Latinos (50.0%) and 11 of 42 Asians (26.2%) disagreed that their pay was fair.¹

A focus group participant made the point that the University system offers limited flexibility for using pay as a reward.

“It’s hard to come up with rewards due to the salary and position structure.”

In part, this is because the contract for professional staff allows for the possibility of merit raises, which do not exist for classified staff. Comments from the focus groups dealt unfavorably with this systemic difference. Talking about differential recognition, an informant brought up:

“...lack of recognition that classified staff receive, and recognition that professionals receive, i.e. merit raises.”

Also regarding merit pay, there was a perception expressed that managers are unfair or inconsistent in dealing with merit review.

“I think my manager holds a high standard... There’s one piece of my job that I didn’t do as well and as a result of that I didn’t get any merit. I know that 95% of everybody else got a merit.”

¹ Although not statistically significant, perhaps due to the small sample size of racial groups other than White, the pattern of difference across racial groups is deemed too important to exclude from mention.

“I ended up getting merit but not what I thought was appropriate. I’ve gotten acknowledgements from other departments and from different stuff I did, but it wasn’t acknowledged in my department.”

Overall, the sense from the focus groups was that the rewards system was not user-friendly. As an informant put it:

“Want to give someone a better job. No mechanism there. Even when a position is available, by the time you go through the posting and the process it doesn’t feel like a reward.”

A&F has made good efforts in establishing the ACE awards program. While some concerns were expressed about the program, employees expressed stronger concerns about organizational limits to pay increases, poor salary structure, and limited and poorly administered merit programs.

Recommendations

Recommendations in this section focus predominantly on the personnel policies and practices and the implementation thereof. Recommendations about demographics, which are mostly about the need to improve numbers, have been covered in another section.

Recruit, Hire and Retain

- Review and revise the process of targeting positions. Create a new process designed to be more effective at recruiting and promoting more women and people of color without engendering those animosities which are often directed at people of color and women applicants and those hired into non-traditional fields. In spite of the perception that targeted positions are only filled by people of color or women, in fact, our success rate of hiring people from targeted groups into these positions has most recently been only 22.6% (2001) and 21% (2000).
- Given concerns raised about issues of disability in A&F, it would be important for us to incorporate recruiting and promotional efforts for people with disabilities along with women and people of color.
- Streamline the hiring process so that we can stop losing potential employees, particularly people of color and others from protected categories, to other employers.
- Renew efforts to recruit people of color and people from other protected categories. Engage the resources on campus such as the Employment Office and EO&D to reinvigorate our outreach efforts (when we're ready to hire again).
- Exit Interviews: Conduct exit interviews to find out why employees are leaving the university. Currently, the only data we have is from a form filled out by the supervisor. Creating a process such as a survey with an opportunity for a follow-up interview could help us understand better why employees in general, and employees of color in particular, leave university employment. Information is needed especially about classified employees.

Access to training and career growth and development opportunities

- Identify opportunities for and barriers to career growth and development, especially for classified staff.
 - Apprentice Program in the Physical Plant: restricted to AFSCME workers only. Also, people who participate need to start at a Grade 5 and go up in salary after finishing the program. The structure of the program and the restrictions for AFSCME workers only make it difficult for people who are currently in the system at a higher grade and can't afford the pay cut to participate. Also, impossible for people to participate from other unions (especially USA/MTA or non-unit clerical staff) or part time or full time, non-benefited employees (of which there are many)

- Create a training program focusing on office skills that could help prepare people who would like to move into administrative assistant positions from other service areas.
- Create career pathways for people of color in custodial and other service sectors to become supervisors. Our greatest concentration of people of color is in these areas and yet there are very few people of color in supervisory positions in these areas.
- Expand opportunities for employees to obtain certification for required licenses in particular areas.
- Create more flexibility in requirements to facilitate promotions from classified to professional positions, especially as it relates to the degree requirements.
- Develop a mentoring program for all new supervisors.
- Improve access to training and development opportunities, especially for classified staff members.
 - Encourage supervisors to schedule training on site during “down times”: for example training is conducted in the Dining Commons during spring break.
 - Provide access to release time for employees in all job classifications to participate in professional development opportunities. Ensure that denial of access to release time is situational and not ongoing.
 - Support making professional development funds available for all employees (especially non-unit classified) regardless of their labor contract.

Rewards and Recognition

- Reevaluate the current step system used to increase salaries for classified staff.
- Review the value of having merit pay raises in some contracts and not in others to determine if it really provides the expected outcomes.
 - The negative impact on classified staff of seeing people who are already paid more eligible for merit appears to be a significant disincentive for many staff.
- Review and revitalize the ACE program to promote renewed usage incorporating the following:
 - Add new and different rewards.
 - Replace current prizes such as mugs and pins with new prizes. They do not need to be significantly more expensive, they simply need to rotate.
 - Make renewed efforts to have all employees and supervisors aware of the process for utilizing the ACE program.

- As much as possible, utilize the program on a divisional level, allowing for more consistency.