

Middle Tennessee State University ADVANCE: Spotlight on Changing the Institutional Culture to Improve the Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement of Women STEM Faculty

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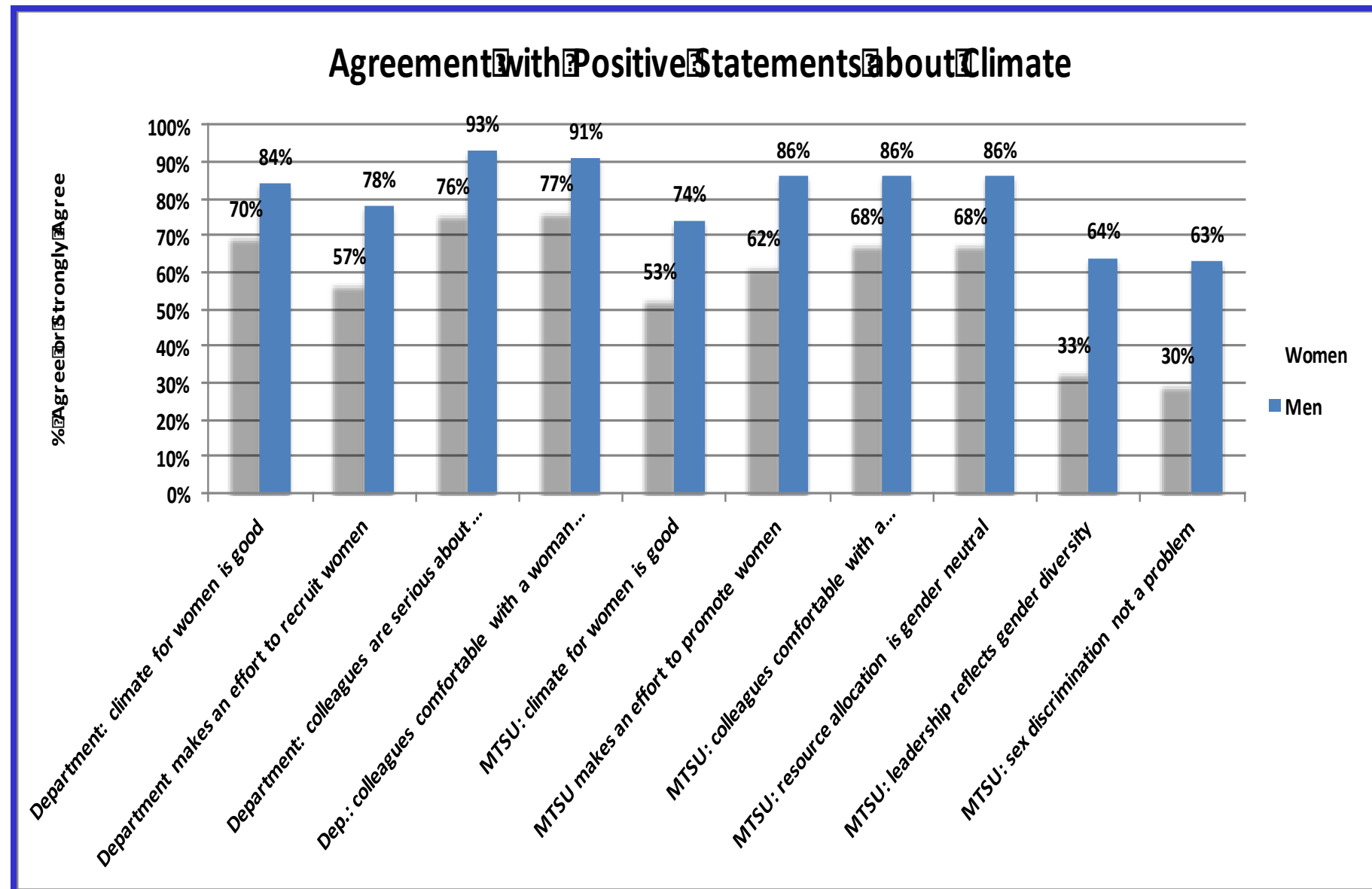
ABSTRACT

Over the past 15 years, Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) has been effectively shifting our focus from a Master's Large University to a Doctoral Research University. This repositioning has resulted in new Ph.D. programs, increased research responsibilities for faculty, and more focus on best practices for the recruitment, retention and promotion of faculty. The MTSU ADVANCE (HRD-1409638) grant provided us the opportunity to analyze the experiences of women STEM faculty with the goal of promoting gender equity. Like many universities, men STEM faculty outrank women, and our hires in STEM are more likely to be men. Our Campus Climate survey and focus groups identified several areas that indicate perceptions of gender disparities. In our survey we find statistically significant differences between the perceptions of women and men about evaluation processes, resource allocation, campus climate, and work-life balance. We also see gender differences in reasons for leaving MTSU, in assessment of salary and workload, in perception of fairness and in concerns about consistency and clarity of tenure and promotion processes. We will present specific findings from the climate survey and focus groups along with recommendations for policy change.

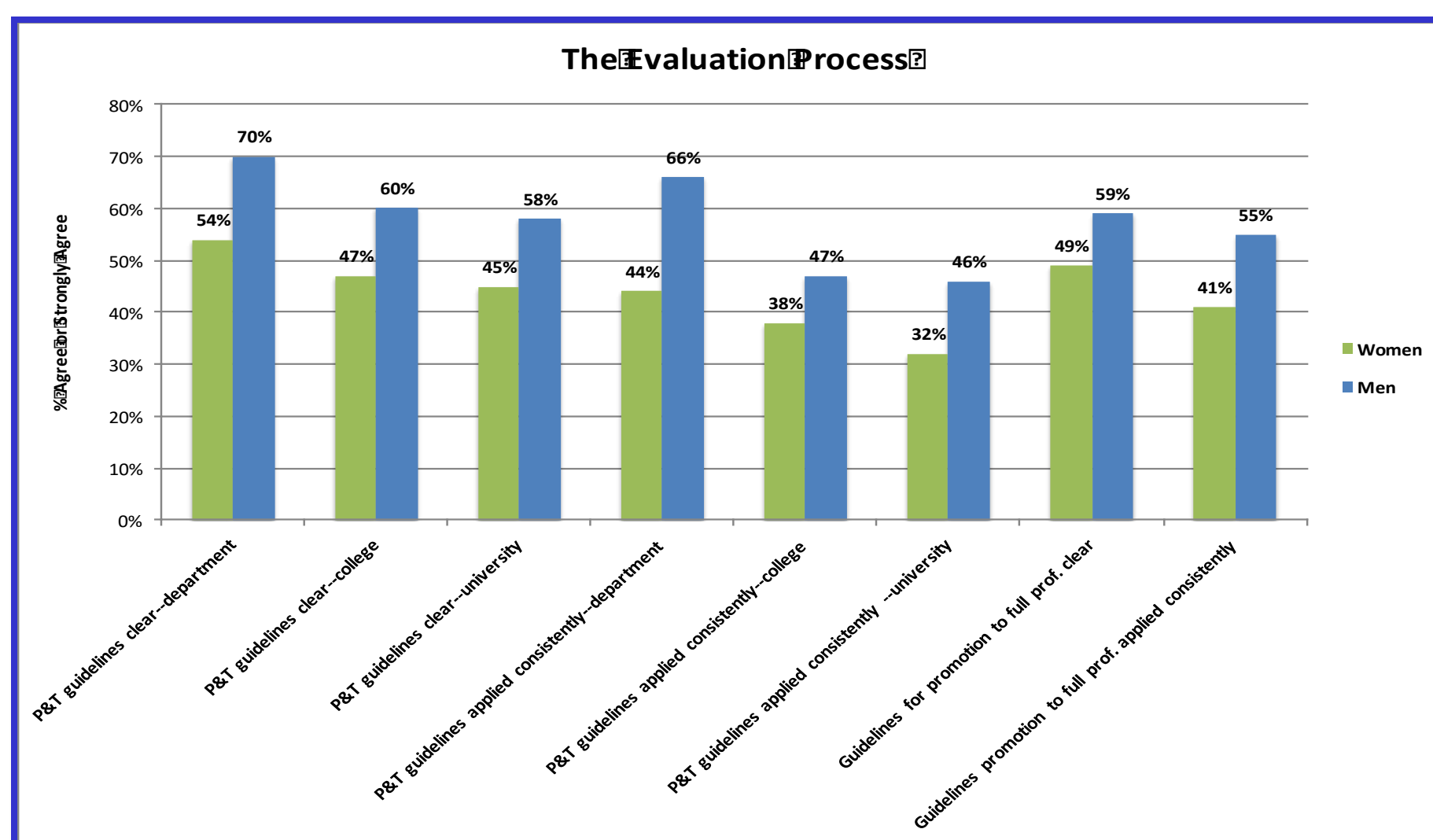
MTSU ADVANCE Catalyst Study

- Campus survey: emphasized resource allocation, evaluation process, compensation, climate and work-life balance
- Focus groups
- Sample of 523, or 56% of fulltime faculty employed by MTSU in Fall 2014
- STEM response rate of 46% of tenure-eligible faculty
- Distribution by sex in the sample and population is identical (70% men and 30% women)
- Distribution by rank varies minimally from the population.
- Untenured faculty make up 16.5% of the populations and 17.6% of the sample

Visit the MTSU ADVANCE website at www.mtsu.edu/wistem/advance
Like us on Facebook at [Women in STEM Center at MTSU](#)

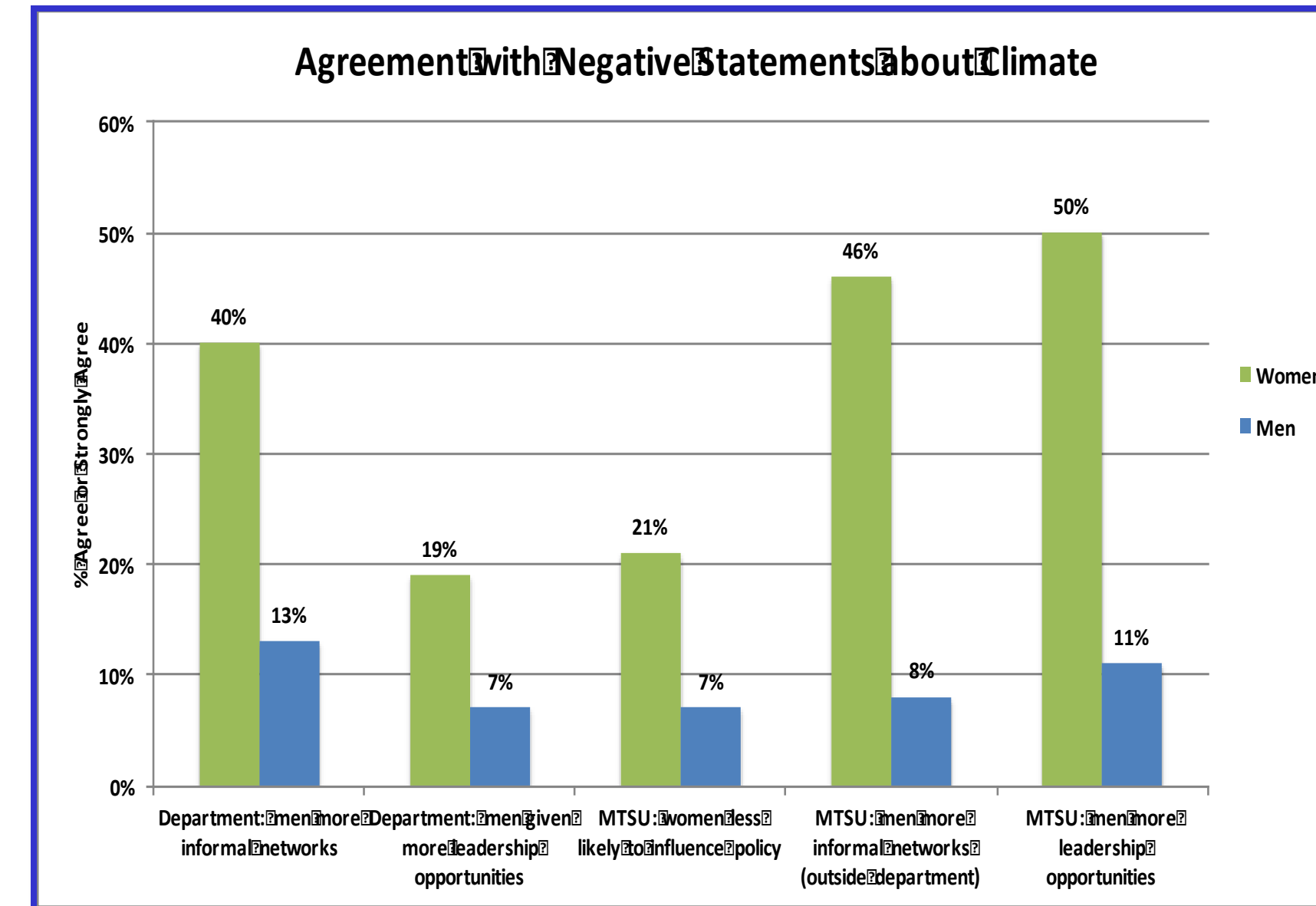


- All of the differences are statistically significant.
- Men are more likely to agree with statements that reflect a positive climate for women.
- Women do not perceive the leadership at the institution to be gender diverse, which reflects the reality.
- Interestingly, 64% of men agreed that leadership at MTSU is gender diverse.
- Women perceive the allocation of leadership opportunities as more likely to be directed to men as well.
- Women are less likely to feel that their colleagues would be comfortable with a woman in leadership.
- Women are less likely to see resource allocation and policy influence at the university level as gender neutral.

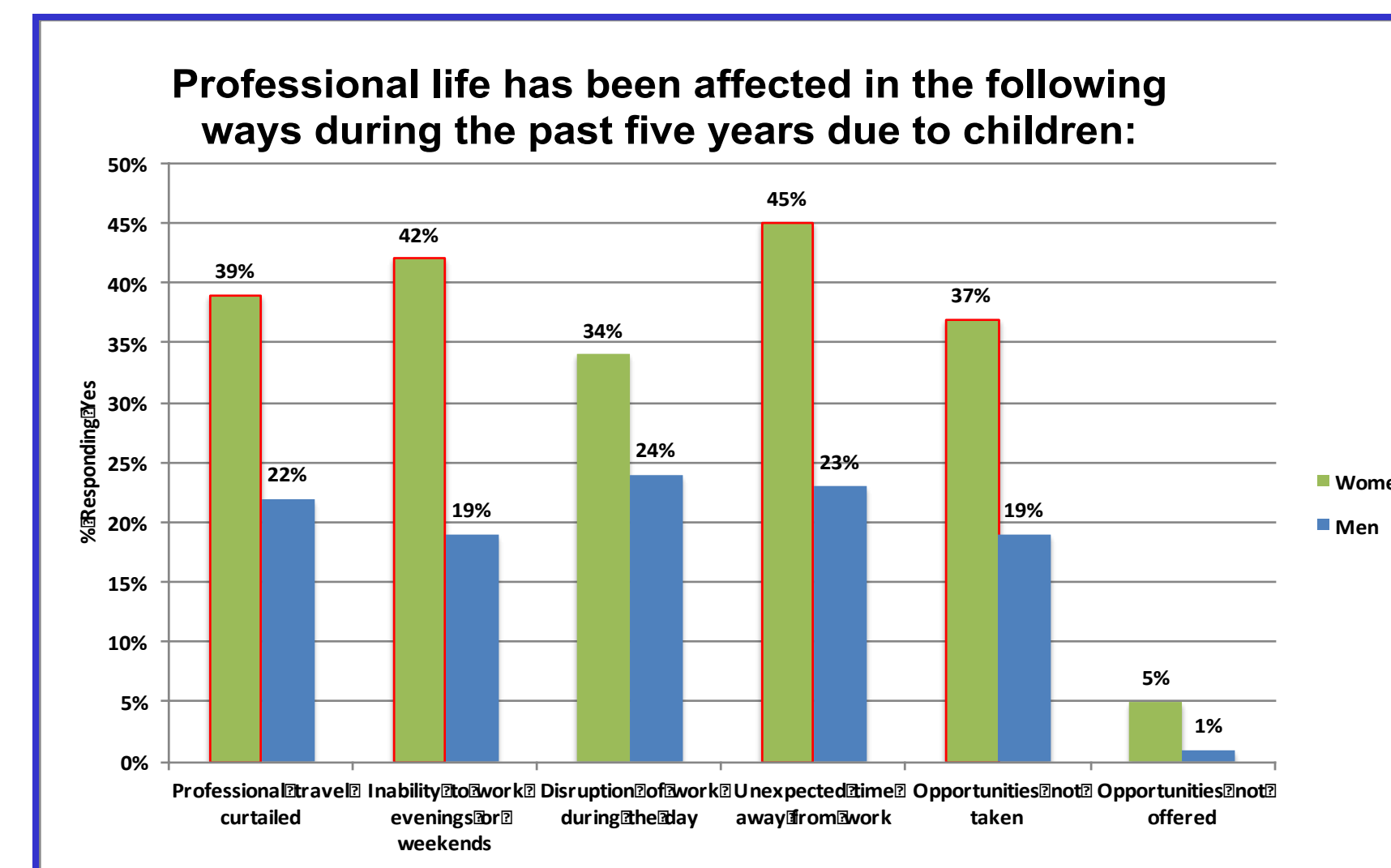


- Only about 50% of women find the policies to be clear at all levels
- In the case of consistent application of P&T guidelines, men are more likely to agree that the application is consistent at all levels. The difference is statistically significant at the department level

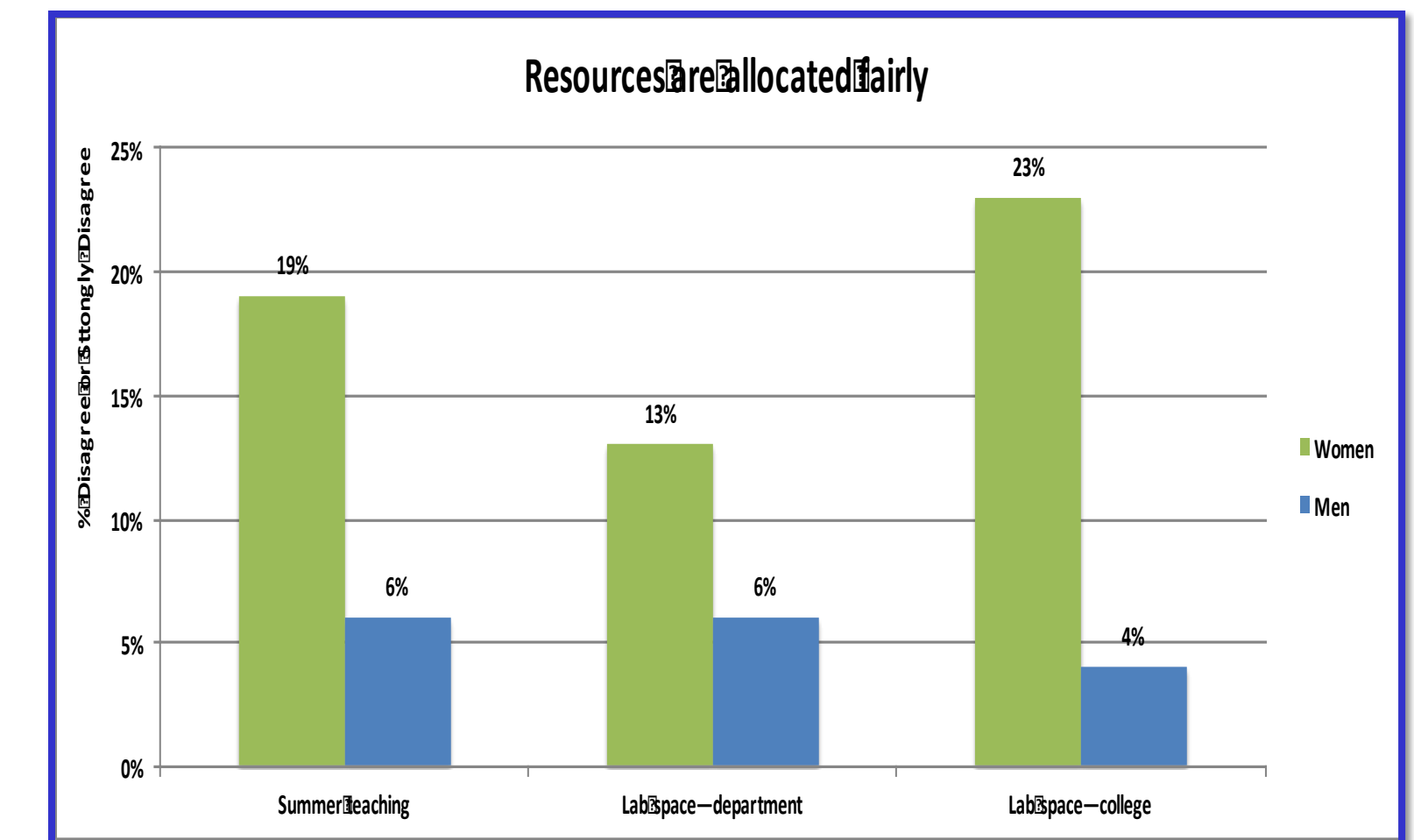
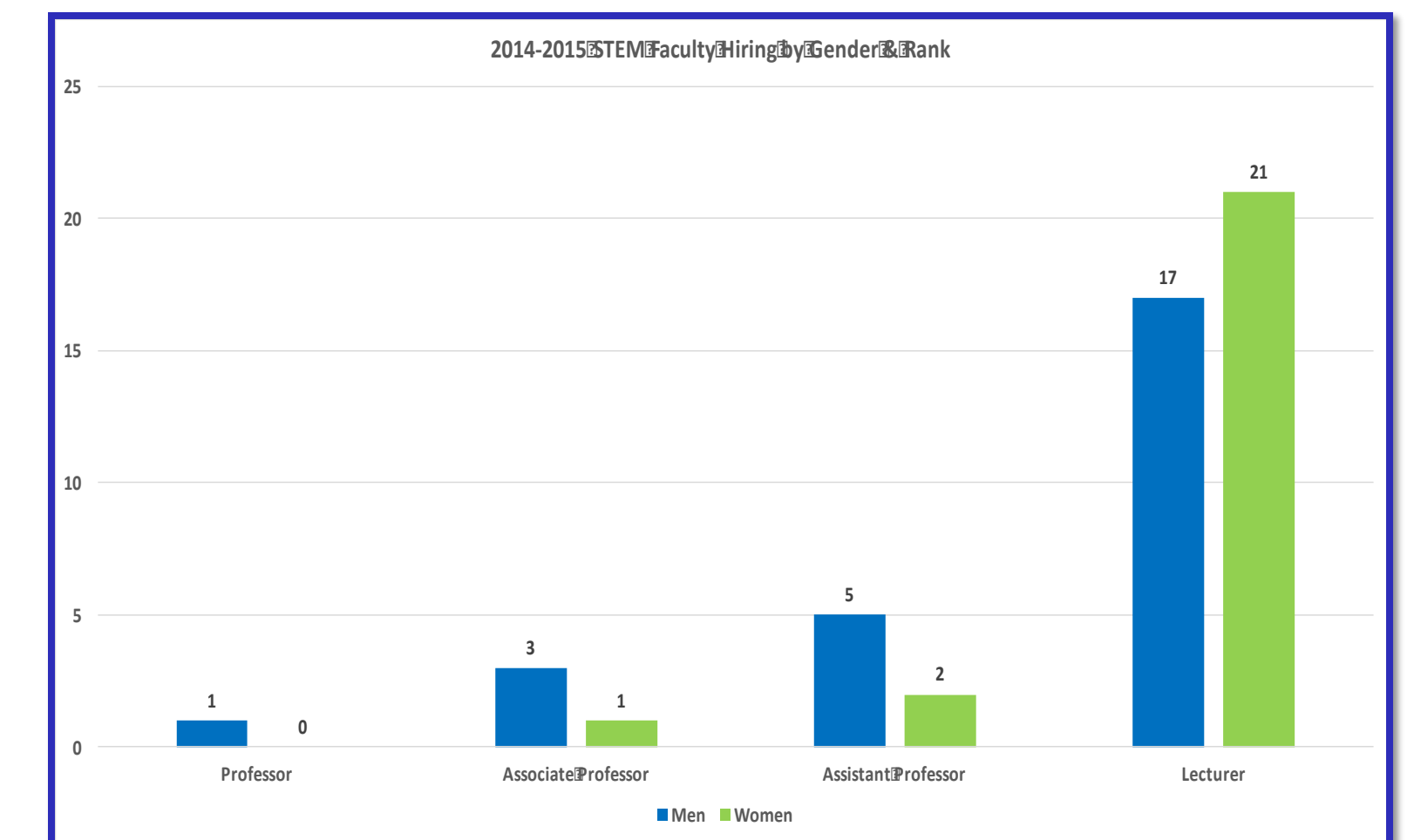
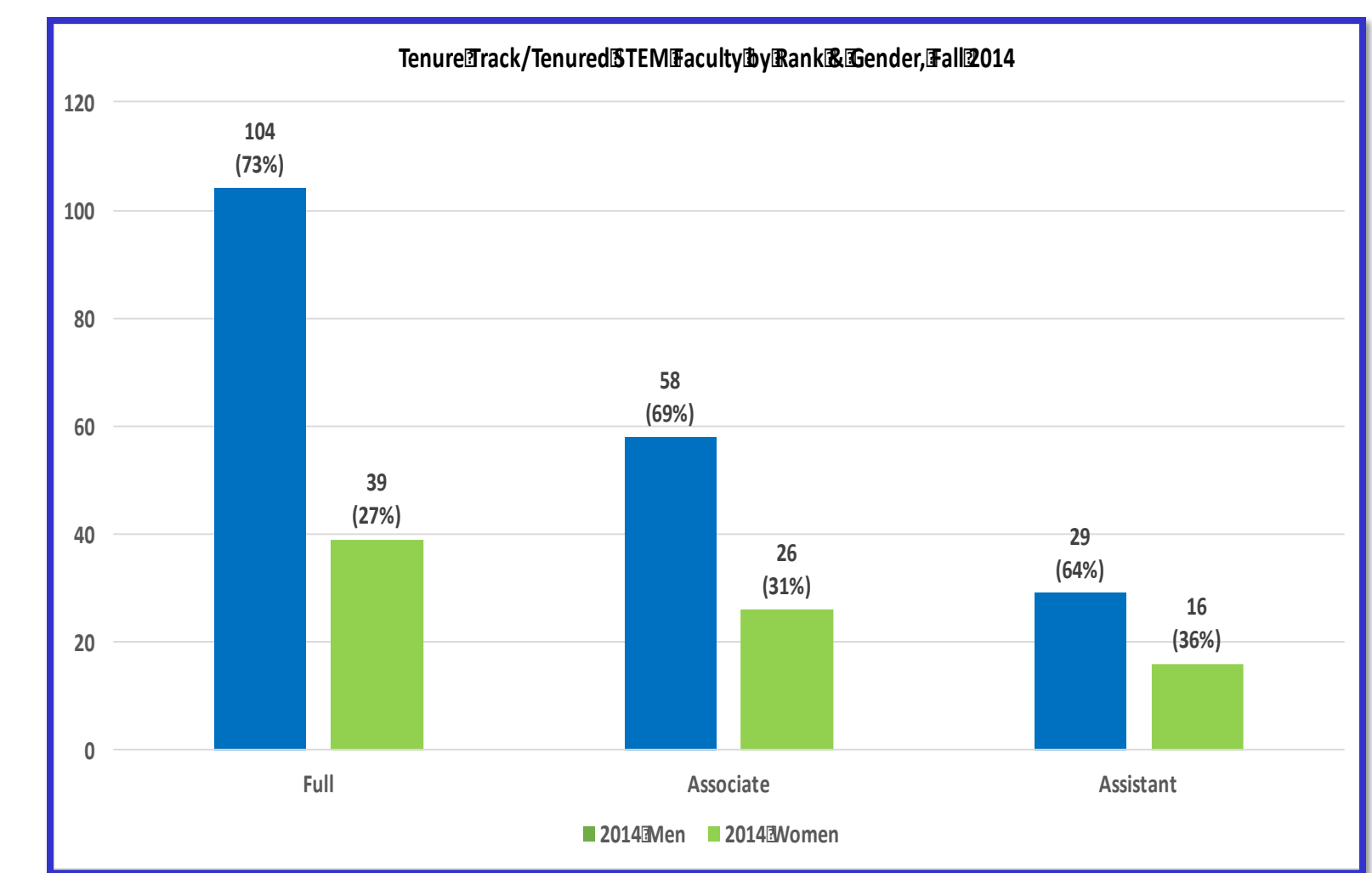
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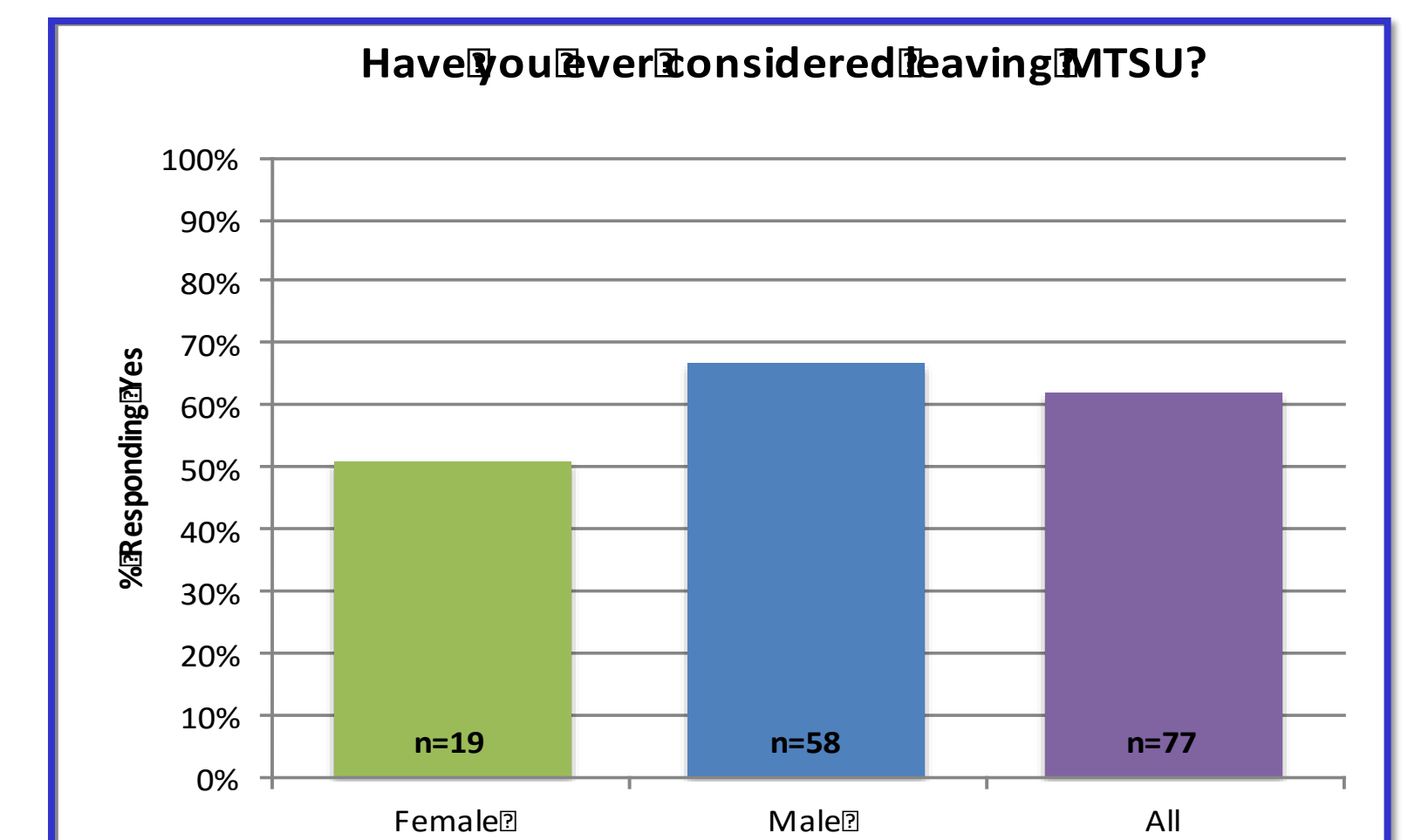
- All of the differences are statistically significant.
- Women are more likely to agree with statements that reflect a negative view of the climate for women.
- Women see informal networking as being more widely available to men at the department level and beyond. Informal networks are an important part of the career progression process
- Women see more leadership opportunities available to men, thus less access to influence for women



- When responding to generic questions about work-life balance, men and women report similar outcomes. Yet, women are significantly more likely than men to report adverse professional consequences as a result of having children.
- Men and women estimate relatively similar levels of responsibility for childcare, yet women are more likely than men to report adverse career effects resulting from having children.
- Between 35-45% of women with children report adverse effects on their career. More so than men in all areas and statistically more so in all but one area.
- Women also report a "good work-life balance" at a higher rate than men despite acknowledging that life has impeded work.



- Women are more likely than men to disagree with the assertion that summer teaching assignments are allocated fairly in the department.
- Summer teaching is potentially lucrative for fulltime faculty at MTSU as it is one of only a few ways to improve gross salary for faculty.
- Women were also far more likely to disagree with the statement that lab space is allocated fairly at the college level.



- 53% cite salary
- 43% cite climate
- 14% cite poor fit in department
- Open-ended responses: workload, family, leadership, promotion/advancement, and overall funding environment