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Women's Climate Survey Committee Report

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I INTRODUCTION

NRAO takes seriously the issues of women in the workplace and in the astronomy community at large. To ensure that our workplace climate is welcoming and inclusive, and that it allows each of us to conduct our work comfortably and productively, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion was charged with surveying women who work at the Observatory. A team of NRAO staff developed the Climate for Women at NRAO survey which asked women staff about their work experiences on 26 topics and about how they view the environment for women at NRAO.

Survey questions were constructed based upon a review of formats and questions used by other astronomy-related organizations¹, and through collaborative effort between representative² staff members at NRAO. Using SurveyMonkey, a set of three demographic questions were created, along with 33 Likert-type scale questions, using level of agreement response anchors (Vagias, 2006). Five open comment sections were included, as well as a final comment section in which employees were asked to include additional information that they believed might be useful in the assessment of climate for women at NRAO.

In order to maximize the opportunity for open and honest responses, SurveyMonkey's anonymity settings were enabled, and respondents were assured at the beginning of the survey, and again at the end, that their IP addresses were not collected.

Using SurveyMonkey, an email invitation was sent to all women staff at NRAO, AUI, and the OCA (see Appendix D). Of the 134 women who work at the Observatory, 87 responded.

After the Climate for Women at NRAO survey was closed on March 1, 2016, a committee of 14 members representing a cross-section of NRAO demographics was formed and charged with reviewing the responses, identifying areas for improvement, and preparing a report to include a summary of the areas of strength as well as identified issues and recommendations for improvement.

After conducting an initial assessment of the responses, the committee identified major themes that indicated areas of dissatisfaction: compensation and promotions (33-43%), harassment (31%), and bullying (45%). A fourth theme, related to family issues was identified post-survey by a number of women who asked that family issues be included in the evaluation process. The committee was divided into four groups to address the major themes, and asked to (a) analyze the survey data, (b) discuss findings, (c) interview staff for more in-depth information, and (d) provide recommendations to the Director.

Following review of the survey responses and assignment of responses to major themes, each topic was discussed by the entire committee, and then subcommittee members held small discussions and interviewed respondents who had indicated an interest in further discussion. Committee members also spoke with staff members who approached the committee with follow-up comments.

In an effort to fully address certain comments and issues that were identified in the survey, committee members needed to perform some investigative work to educate themselves to appropriately form recommendations. Members of the Human Resources team participated in multiple question and answer meetings to address specific concerns from the committee.

¹ Including the [University of California Climate Assessment Project](#)

² Women staff members representing a cross section of demographics, including career level, career path, and site

Each group then agreed on a number of potential resolutions focusing heavily on improving communication with staff. These recommendations were then summarized at the end of this report by the entire committee.

Limitations to Study

It is important to note that this survey did not speak to the timeframe of respondents' experiences, but instead established a baseline for measurement of future improvements. For example, staff were asked to indicate whether or not they had experienced incidents of bullying, but were not asked to identify how recently the bullying had occurred. This made it difficult to assess, from the survey data alone, whether or not bullying was currently an issue, or if recent efforts to emphasize NRAO's anti-bullying policies, combined with training, had mitigated the reported problems.

Approximately one-third of women staff members do not have regular access to computers (e.g., Green Bank cafeteria staff). This lack of access may have impacted both the response rate and the responses.

Anecdotal evidence, collected during follow-up interviews, indicates that at least some of the respondents made efforts to further conceal their identity by intentionally providing misleading information (e.g., changing site location, career path, etc.). These biases affect, to an unknown extent, the validity and reliability of the survey findings.

Characteristic	Subgroup	Population		Sample		Response Rate
		N	%	n	%	
Gender	Woman	134		87		65%
Position	Astronomer/Scientist			16	18.82	
	Professional/Technical			19	22.35	
	Administrative Support			28	32.94	
	Management			23	27.06	
	Other			13	15.29	
Location	AUI	3		1	1.18	
	CDL			4	4.71	
	Chile	9		6	7.06	
	Edgemont Rd			28	32.94	
	Green Bank	41		19	22.35	
	Socorro	31		18	21.18	
	VLA	8		3	3.53	
	VLBA	0		0	0	
	Prefer not to answer			6	7.06	

Table 1: Survey responses by position and location

2 COMPENSATION AND PROMOTIONS

Subcommittee members: Tracy Samples, Peggy Perley, and Paulina Bocaz

2.1 Results

The NRAO Climate for Women Survey contains 17 statements on topics in the general areas of recruitment and promotions where respondents could indicate how strongly they felt on a spectrum about a given statement. These statements are split among the following three groups, as labeled in the survey.

Group 4 – These are concerned mainly with attitudes at work that may affect promotions.

My voice is heard in meetings; My input is respected by my peers; My input is respected by my supervisor; My input is respected by senior management; I have access to the tools/equipment/materials that I need to do my job; I am given equal consideration for the 'best' (most valued) assignments.

The results of the survey show that the majority answer for all questions in Group 4 were strongly agree or agree, with those two answers chosen by 60% or more of the respondents.

Question 4. Please let us know how much you agree/disagree with the following statements: [percentages rounded]					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My voice is heard in meetings	28% (24)	47% (41)	8% (7)	14% (12)	3% (3)
My input is respected by my peers	38% (33)	39% (34)	17% (15)	5% (4)	1% (1)
My input is respected by senior management	28% (24)	33% (29)	23% (20)	11% (10)	5% (4)
I have access to the tools/equipment I need to do my job	37% (32)	55% (48)	3% (3)	3% (3)	1% (1)
I am given equal consideration for the "best" (most valued) jobs	27% (23)	34% (29)	27% (23)	7% (6)	5% (4)

Table 2: Responses to Question 2, Attitudes at work

Group 5 – These relate to factors that may help or hinder promotions.

Recruitment and selection; Remuneration (wages and other financial benefits); Appraisal/Performance management; Training and Development opportunities; Promotion opportunities; Office assignments; Family/parental leave; Effort required for recognition of contribution.

The Group 5 results show that the respondents felt that recruitment, appraisals, training opportunities, assignments, leave opportunities, and recognition were fair, as indicated by a rating as such by over 50%; however, three areas did not achieve a 50% rating of fair. These areas were compensation (43% thought unfair, 31% unsure), promotional opportunities (33% thought unfair, 27% unsure), and effort required for recognition (34% unfair, 17% unsure).

Question 5. Based upon your personal experience, do you think that men and women at your workplace are treated equally in the following areas?				
	Men & women are treated equally	Men are treated less favorably	Women are treated less favorably	Not sure/no opinion
Recruitment and selection	55% (47)	3.5% (3)	16.5% (14)	25% (21)
Remuneration (wages and other financial benefits)	25% (22)	1% (1)	42.5% (37)	31% (27)
Appraisal/performance management	50% (43)	0	22% (19)	28% (24)
Training and development opportunities	65% (55)	1% (1)	18% (15)	16.5% (14)
Promotion opportunities	38% (33)	1% (1)	33% (29)	27.5% (24)
Office assignments	59.5% (50)	0	12% (10)	28.5% (24)
Family/parental leave	51% (42)	13% (11)	7% (6)	29% (24)
Effort required for recognition of contribution	47% (41)	1% (1)	34.5% (30)	17% (15)

Table 3: Responses to Question 5, Equality in the workplace

Group 6 – These questions reflect perceptions of biases in NRAO recruitment practices.

Hiring practices at NRAO are transparent/fair, with regard to gender; Hiring committees make a conscious effort to treat candidates equally, regardless of gender or family situation; Workloads are equitably distributed regardless of gender.

Finally, answers on the statements on hiring practices in Group 6 show that respondents were evenly divided in their opinions as to whether they agreed, strongly agreed with, or were neutral about the statements (almost an even 30%-30%-30% split).

Question 6. Please let us know how much you agree/disagree with the following statements:					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Hiring practices at NRAO are transparent/fair	30% (26)	30% (26)	25.5% (22)	12% (10)	2% (2)
Hiring committees make a conscious effort to treat candidates equally, regardless of gender or family situation	28% (24)	32% (27)	30.5% (26)	8% (7)	1% (1)
Workloads are equally distributed regardless of gender	30.5% (26)	33% (28)	26% (22)	7% (6)	3.5% (3)

Table 4: Responses to Question 6, Hiring practices

2.2 Analysis

The survey results relevant to the areas of compensation and promotions indicate an overall positive impression that respondents have concerning their opportunities at work to demonstrate their skills, be listened to, and be held in favorable regard. There are strong indications that survey respondents feel their voices are heard in meetings (75% agree/strongly agree), and that their input is respected by their peers (67%) and senior management (53%). This attests that the NRAO environment is accepting of women in the workplace, that women are managed on an equal footing with men, and that there is little perception, as shown in this survey, that women are denied opportunities to show their worth and to be viewed in the same light as men for promotions and recognition. There is also a 90% positive impression among women that NRAO does not discriminate in its hiring practices.

However, there is also a strong indication in the survey that many women either feel or suspect that their compensation does not favorably compare with men's. Fewer than 50% of respondents indicated that the statements describing compensation as equitable were a fair representation of our organization. This can be a reflection of several factors. Since there were a large number of "not sure" responses in these categories, it could reflect a lack of knowledge about salary schedules and wage scales. It is possible that the perception that women are treated less favorably than men in terms of remuneration stems from many women at the Observatory being in positions that have less compensation, e.g., 33% of women are in administrative support services.

With regard to the statement about promotions, the survey shows about the same number of respondents believe that promotions are fair to women as believe that they are unfair to women, even though the data earlier in the survey show that they consider their treatment at work to be fair and equitable. Again, HR may need to review the promotion process to determine actual facts. Adding to the confusion regarding promotions, the process is different for scientists and non-scientists. It may not be clear to supervisors and staff how a typical staff member can progress in their job category, at what pace, and who initiates advancement. There is a call for promotions once a year in addition to hiring to fill open positions, so perhaps that leads to confusion about how promotions are granted, when such opportunities are available, and who is eligible for them.

One survey respondent identified an inconsistency in how uniforms are supported within their division citing that the janitors, who are mostly women, do not get uniform supplements as provided to the maintenance team. Human Resources (HR) immediately resolved this issue by working with management to provide an allotment for janitor uniforms. Additionally, HR conducted follow-up interviews with employees in the janitorial role to inquire about the implementation of the benefit.

2.3 Key Findings: Areas of Strength

- The methodology on determination of pay is reviewed by classification and grade, not by site unless the job title is site specific. Certain non-exempt positions are only recruited locally and pay for these positions is more locally driven versus exempt positions which are recruited nationally and are, therefore, benchmarked at a national level.
- HR reviews for pay equity during the hiring process.
- 25% of the workforce is female and, in the last round of promotions, 31% of promotions that occurred went to females.
- Compensation 101 training is being provided to managers at all sites. This training will help managers understand how specific job pay is determined and will also help managers be better prepared to talk to employees about pay concerns.
- In the area of hiring practices, survey respondents represented a 90% positive impression among women that NRAO does not discriminate in its hiring practices.
- Improvements have been made in Scientific staff hiring procedure by implementing the Scientific Staff Manual, requiring all search committee members to attend an Unconscious Bias training, requiring that an HR representative be a member of each search committee, and more aggressively posting scientific positions on job boards that focus on women members.

2.4 Key Findings: Opportunities for Improvement

- Ensure HR has an opportunity to communicate their compensation process to correct a negative perception, and communicate facts regarding gender remuneration in equivalent positions.
- More education regarding where compensation materials can be found for factual comparisons can to be made available to staff to eliminate misunderstandings regarding pay scales and job categories.
- Summary of the promotion/compensation processes for presentation at All-Hands meetings (increase transparency).
- HR is training supervisors on compensation. Once this material is fully developed, determine if it is appropriate to present to a wider audience.
- Much effort seems to be concentrated on hiring women in the scientific positions, but NRAO needs to ensure that the same effort goes into hiring in other disciplines (e.g., IT, engineers, technicians, trades, etc.).
- Explore ways (through the PEP process and training) to encourage women to gain training and qualifications so as to be eligible for more highly compensated pay grades. A personal development goal on the PEP would build this into the process. The Science Performance Review Committee has already made suggestions on improving the PEP forms for the scientific staff.
- Remind managers reminded to keep job descriptions current, as this assists compensation and promotions reviews.

- NRAO should articulate a commitment to training and professional development at all levels so that promotion from within is a core value.

3 HARASSMENT

Subcommittee members: Faye Giles, Melan Hebert Terleckyj, and Amy Mioduzewski

	No	Yes –experienced	Yes - witnessed
Sexual teasing, jokes, remarks, looks, and/or gestures	71% (61)	22% (19)	10.5% (9)
Deliberate touching, leaning, cornering	93% (81)	5% (4)	2% (2)
Pressure for dates, letters, calls, and/or sexual materials	100% 87	0	0
Stalking	98% (85)	1% (1)	1% (1)
Actual/attempted physical assault	99% (86)	1% (1)	0

Table 5: Responses to harassment questions

3.1 Results and Analysis

The survey asked, “Have you experienced, or witnessed any of the following behaviors at NRAO?” and whether a person had experienced or witnessed “Sexual teasing, jokes, remarks, looks and/or gestures,” “Deliberate touching, leaning cornering,” “Pressure for dates, letters, called, and/or sexual materials,” “Stalking,” and “Actual/attempted physical assault” (see Table 5). See table 5 for breakdown of responses. 31% reported witnessing or experiencing one of these behaviors. Of those who reported these behaviors, 70% also reported bullying. Figure 1 shows the number of each type of harassment that was reported. Note that the total number is larger than 27 because some respondents reported more than one type of harassment. Zero respondents reported “pressure for dates...” so that is left out. There was one report of “Actual/attempted assault,” but there is very little additional information about this respondent: they didn’t select a location and gave the reason for not doing so as “risk.” Also the only comment the respondent included was “Change has to start at the top.”

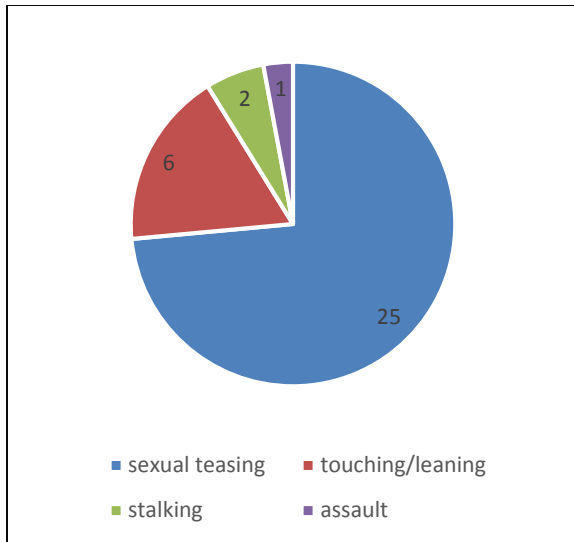


Figure 1: Number of reports of each type of harassment

Of the seven sites that responded to the survey, two had no reports of harassment, AUI and Chile, and are not included in the following graphs. The distribution of reports of harassment is uneven across the sites; in other words, 31% of the total respondents reported some sort of harassment, but some sites were more likely to report harassment. See Figure 2 which displays the percentage of respondents from each site and the percentage of reports of witnessing or experiencing harassment at each site out of the total number of harassment reports. The CDL had only four total responses to the survey and the Very Large Array (VLA) had only three; however, the high percentage of reports at the VLA is concerning (two reports out of three survey responses). There are also a higher than typical number of reports from Green Bank (GB) and a slightly higher number of reports from Edgemont Road (ER); there are fewer reports than typical from Socorro. Lastly, there are a higher number of reports from people who chose to not reveal their location, which reflects a heightened desire for anonymity. Some of the “no location” respondents actually said they were worried about the risk of being identified.

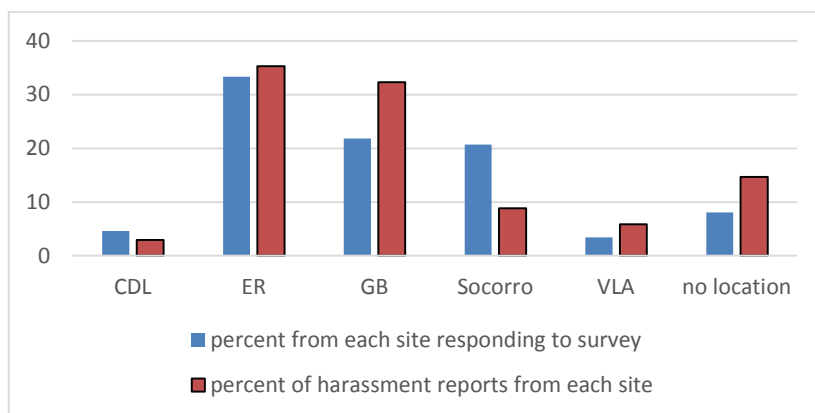


Figure 2: Distribution of harassment reports at all sites. AUI and Chile had no reports so are excluded

It should be noted that one respondent who reported “Sexual teasing” at ER said she didn’t mind and it was part of the culture in her group. Also there were two reports of stalking at GB and, as one was “witnessed” and one was “experienced,” they may well be related.

Question 8 was about whether the respondents were satisfied with how the behavior was addressed; unfortunately, the behavior in question was not specified resulting in many people reporting more than one behavior, and the majority who reported a behavior also reported “bullying.” The only signal found in the data was that a vast majority (78%) did not report the behavior to HR or their supervisor, but of those that did 70% were unsatisfied with the response.

- The one time I witnessed sexual harassment, I wish I had said something. It was not overt, just a comment from an advisor to his graduate student that obviously made her uncomfortable.
- I do not think it was resolved in any way, but the actions lessened quite a bit.
- I apologized when I should have told the person to stop.
- Subtle and subversive activity is still ongoing.

There may have been a problem with this survey regarding anonymity because if you responded and reported one of the more serious types of harassment, which are both rarer and more likely to be reported to HR, and you responded that you were dissatisfied with the outcome when you reported it the harassment to HR, it was likely that HR could easily determine the identity of the reporting staff member. An interview with a woman who experienced serious harassment indicated that she was not filling out the survey because of this very concern. Research has shown that names are withheld typically out of fear of retaliation or a desire to not be involved and not because the issue reported is deliberately false or frivolous. Because of the anonymity of the survey, it is not possible to follow up with those who were not satisfied with the resolution.

	AUI	CDL	Chile	ER	GB	Soc	VLA	No Site ID	Total
Sexual teasing, jokes, remarks	0	1% (1)	0	11.5% (10)	7% (6)	3.5% (3)	2% (2)	3.5% (3)	36% (25)
Touching, leaning, cornering	0	0	0	2% (2)	3.5% (3)	0	0	1% (1)	7% (6)
Pressure for dates,	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stalking	0	0	0	0	2% (2)	0	0	0	2% (2)
Actual/attempted physical assault	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1% (1)	1% (1)
Total reports from each site	0	1% (1)	0	14% (12)	13% (11)	3.5% (3)	2% (2)	5.5% (5)	39% (34)
Total Survey Respondents from each site	1% (1)	4.5% (4)	7% (6)	33% (29)	22% (19)	21% (18)	3.5% (3)	8% (7)	100% (87)

Table 6: Reports of harassment by site

3.2 Key Findings: Areas of Strength

- While the appropriate procedure is followed and the case is considered resolved by HR, the resolution may not live up to employee expectations.
- Policy acknowledgement now mandatory and tracked.
- Unlawful Harassment mandatory training upcoming.

3.3 Key Findings: Opportunities for Improvement

- As a standard practice for new hires, the orientation packet can be updated to include instructions for the process of completing mandatory harassment training. The training system could be set up so the tutorial automatically sends new hires an email with a link to complete the training, followed by weekly reminders until the process is completed (similar to the PEP process).
- Create a poster/brochure that is clear on how/who/where to report harassment, and post it in common areas in each Observatory facility.
- In addition to Ombudpersons, the AUI's Ethics & Integrity Line can be communicated to all staff via NRAO's website and with posters and brochures. EthicsPoint, a third party vendor, staffs the Ethics & Integrity Line and is available via telephone and online. AUI staff can file a report or ask a question from anywhere.
 - <https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/41418/index.html>

4 BULLYING

Subcommittee members: Magdalene Romero, Crystal Brogan, and Connie Gallegos

4.1 Analysis

Bullying covers a wide range of behaviors, extending from teasing to violent assault. Obvious behaviors include physical threats and verbal abuse such as ridiculing and constant criticism. Concealed actions include lying, spreading malicious rumors, and undermining performance by denying individuals information and access to the basic material required to perform their tasks effectively. Question 7 asks if you have ever experienced or witnessed bullying as one of the behaviors. According to the results from the survey, 45%, or 49 out of 87 respondents either experienced or witnessed bullying – this was one of the strongest negative signals in the survey.

The survey question was not prefaced by a definition of “bullying,” nor were examples provided. This lack of clarity makes it difficult to assess the types of behaviors that were experienced, and/or witnessed, by the respondents. The lack of temporal resolution makes it challenging to determine when (and how often) the reported behaviors took place (i.e., currently occurring or occurred in the past. Some responders indicated that they both witnessed and experienced bullying; it is possible that some of reports refer to a single bullying event that was witnessed by more than one person. This lack of precision makes it difficult to identify just how many instances of bullying occurred, and over what time period(s).

Management reported the highest numbers of bullying experienced (11) and witnessed (8), with administrative support staff reporting experiencing (7) and/or witnessing bullying (9). By location, CV had the most respondents that experienced or witnessed bullying (16), followed by Socorro (10), then GB (7), with only one from Chile. Five respondents did not give location. It is important to note that several accompanying comments indicated that the some of the reported bullying occurred in the past:

- The person who demonstrated the most egregious behavior that I've witnessed is no longer at NRAO.
- In cases where I have witnessed this, I have also witnessed supervisors/management stepping in immediately. Also, I have not seen such incidents in the last few years (= things are better).
- The bullying was women to women and I didn't realize it at the actual time it occurred.
- The bullying I experienced was by other females and was many years ago (like 20).
- Tony has sent a very positive message that there is a zero tolerance for this behavior and that is greatly appreciated.

4.2 Results

Question 7 of the survey asked if the respondent had ever experienced or witnessed bullying. 24 women reported experiencing bullying, and 23 reported witnessing bullying events.

	No	Yes –experienced	Yes - witnessed
Bullying	55% (48)	27.5% (24)	26% (23)

Table 7: Responses to bullying questions

Bullying event?	Astronomer/ Scientist	Tech/ Info services	Administrative Support	Management	Other
No	7	15	15	7	8
Yes- experienced	5	3	7	11	4
Yes-witnessed	7	2	9	8	1

Table 8: Responses to bullying question by career path

Bullying event?	Early career (0-10 years)	Mid-career (10-25 years)	Late career (25+ years)
No	61% (17)	52.5% (21)	36% (8)
Yes-experienced	32% (9)	15% (6)	32% (7)
Yes-witnessed	7% (2)	32.5% (13)	32% (7)

Table 9: Responses to bullying question by career stage

Bullying	AUI	CDL	Chile	ER	GB	Soc	VLA
No	1% (1)	100% (4)	83% (5)	39% (12)	60% (12)	53% (10)	33% (1)
Yes – experienced	0	0	0	35.5% (11)	25% (5)	10.5% (2)	33% (1)
Yes – witnessed	0	0	17% (1)	26% (8)	15% (3)	37% (7)	33% (1)
Total reports	1	4	6	31	20	19	3

Table 10: Responses to bullying question by site

4.3 Key Findings: Areas of Strength

- In 2015, HR provided non-mandatory training on bullying issues.
- HR has recently purchased an on-line training system on harassment and bullying which will be required for everyone.
- ODI will begin management training in August 2016.
- Staff became required to acknowledge the annual policy statement through ETK in 2016.
- Anti-harassment and anti-bullying policies are posted on designated bulletin boards at each site, and on the NRAO website.

4.4 Key Findings: Opportunities for Improvement

- Staff, including managers and supervisors, should be aware of their roles in relation to preventing and responding to workplace bullying, and should have the skills to take appropriate action where necessary.

- Provide additional informational posters at the sites, a banner on ETK, and a slide in the All-Hands meeting presentation.
- ODI's management training in August 2016 should include instruction on several possible courses of action supervisors can take in response to reported incidents of bullying.
- Training for staff can be provided in various ways including through online courses, podcasts, and face-to-face training. Our team strongly suggests that an outside trainer be brought to each site to increase participation and interaction. ODI and HR have a researched list of resources.
- In discussion of the survey results, we concluded that the survey questions did not pin down the timeframe for bullying or gather information on observed improvements, if any. We recommend an additional bullying-specific survey for all staff that can also be used as both a metric and as a tool to raise awareness. Questions could also be included in the periodic HR climate surveys.
- Future surveys can be made stronger by including definitions and examples of bullying behavior so that analysis of the responses can be improved.

5 FAMILY

Subcommittee members: Rachel Rosen and Claire Chandler

5.1 Analysis and Results

Family issues were not specifically covered in the survey other than to ask if men and women were treated fairly under the family/parental leave policies. However, several participants commented in this area, specifically on improvement in family leave policies (particularly when both parents are employees) and concern that women were disadvantaged if they had young children.

- There is a problem when both partners are NRAO employees... when NRAO has trouble hiring women a more progressive leave policy could be really powerful.
- Some of our policies favor women on the scientific staff
- After return to work from maternity leave: I have gotten comments and remarks from a few male colleagues about “not really working”
- When some of these family requests are honored they are sometimes later treated as favors... since men do not have to ask for these favors and are therefore perceived as more hard working and serious
- Quite poor... especially when it comes to inclement weather and family sick time

Given the task by the committee to focus on family issues, we reached out to NRAO women with young (elementary age or younger) children. We talked to eight women in Charlottesville and Socorro; of these, six had spouses who are also NRAO employees. This was by no means a comprehensive list of women at NRAO with young children and was heavily biased to women in science, engineering, computing, or other technical roles.

Because family issues were not explicitly addressed in the survey, and lack of broad-reaching data using US institutions, we drew upon other resources, including the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) survey in Australia, which is a factor in setting family friendly work initiatives at CSIRO. The CPSU in Australia carries out the [What Women Want Survey](#). In 2013, 11209 women participated and almost all (98.3%) ranked flexible work arrangements as very important or important.

Some of the biggest issues facing women when returning to work are childcare, cannot/unwilling to leave young children behind when traveling (which can negatively affect networking), reduced working hours, and coping with the unpredictable nature of small children. To address these issues, CSIRO has funded several programs and grants which offer childcare support, meeting and travel support, cost coverage of family/nanny travel, and additional time on contract renewal.

5.2 Impact of Family-friendly Initiatives

In the United States, The Council of Economic Advisers (as part of the Executive Office of the President) produced [The Economics of Paid and Unpaid Leave in 2014](#). This survey found that leave (paid or unpaid) from the employer’s perspective can have a positive effect on long-term productivity by improving recruitment, retention, and employee motivation. The report also cites a survey of 253 employers affected by California’s paid family leave initiative and found that more than 90% reported either positive or no noticeable effect on profitability, turnover, and morale (Appelbaum and Milkman 2011). The report found that paid leave policies can help businesses recruit talented workers who plan to stay with the company after having children. In a survey of 200 human resource managers, two-thirds cited family-friendly initiatives as the single most important factor in hiring and retaining employees (Williams 2001). A review of 27 separate case studies found that the median cost of replacing an employee was 21 percent of that

employee’s annual salary, which can be reduced with family-friendly leave policies (Boushey and Glynn 2012). The Economics of Paid and Unpaid Leave report also cites a 1998 survey of large and medium-sized companies and found that almost half reported a positive return on flexible work arrangements or caregiving leave policies and 80% found such policies to be cost-neutral (Galinsky and Bond 1998).

5.3 Maternity leave policies at comparable institutions

The plot below shows how NRAO’s parental leave compares to other observatories, university faculty, university staff, and industry. Note that there is some interpretation in these values: each institution has their own requirements on how long a person must be employed before receiving benefits, there is ambiguity on the definition of “eligible employees,” and “paid” might be fractional pay. If an employee has to use sick/vacation time for parental leave, that was not counted as paid leave. Institutions with an asterisk indicate an extension on the tenure clock in the available documentation. See the *References* section for all sources.

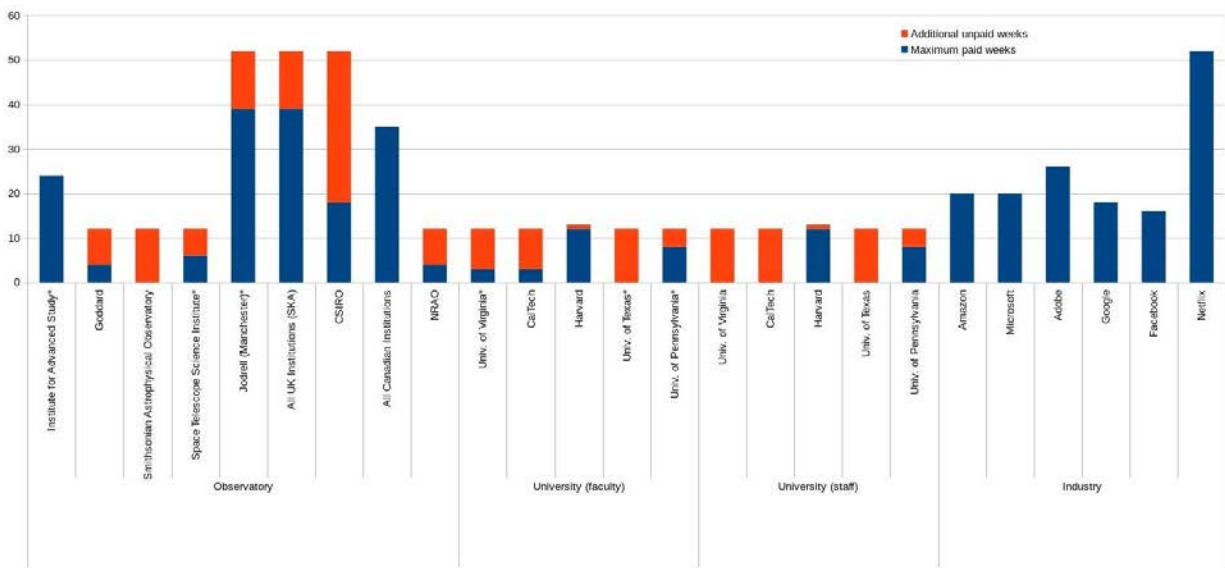


Figure 3: Family leave at other institutions

How Many Weeks of Paid Leave do Tech Companies Offer New Moms?

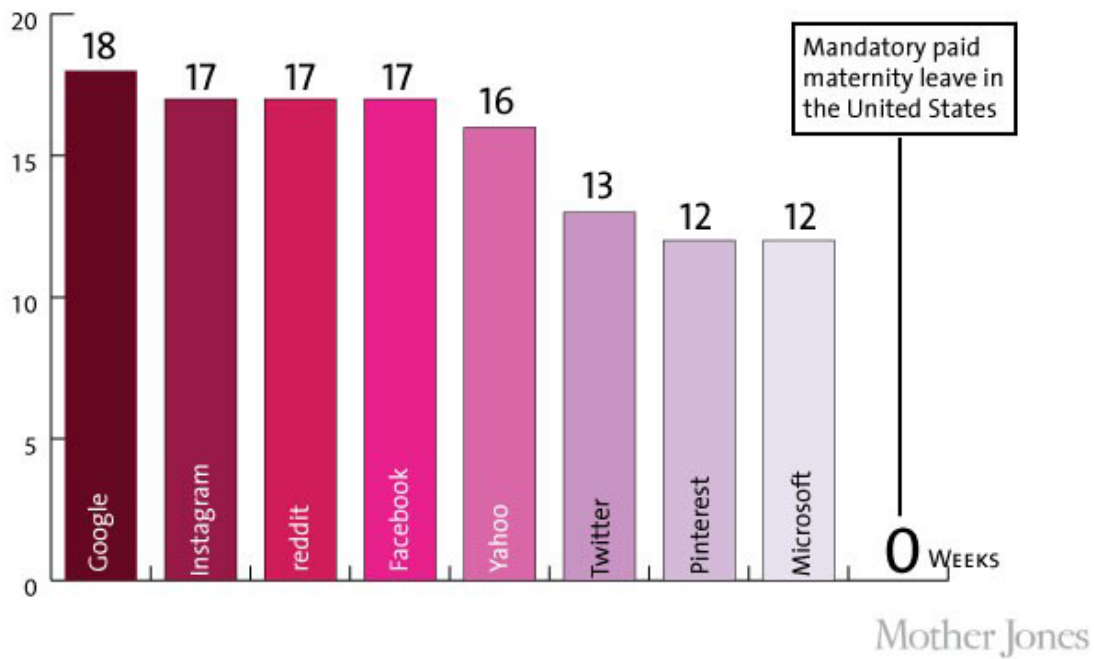
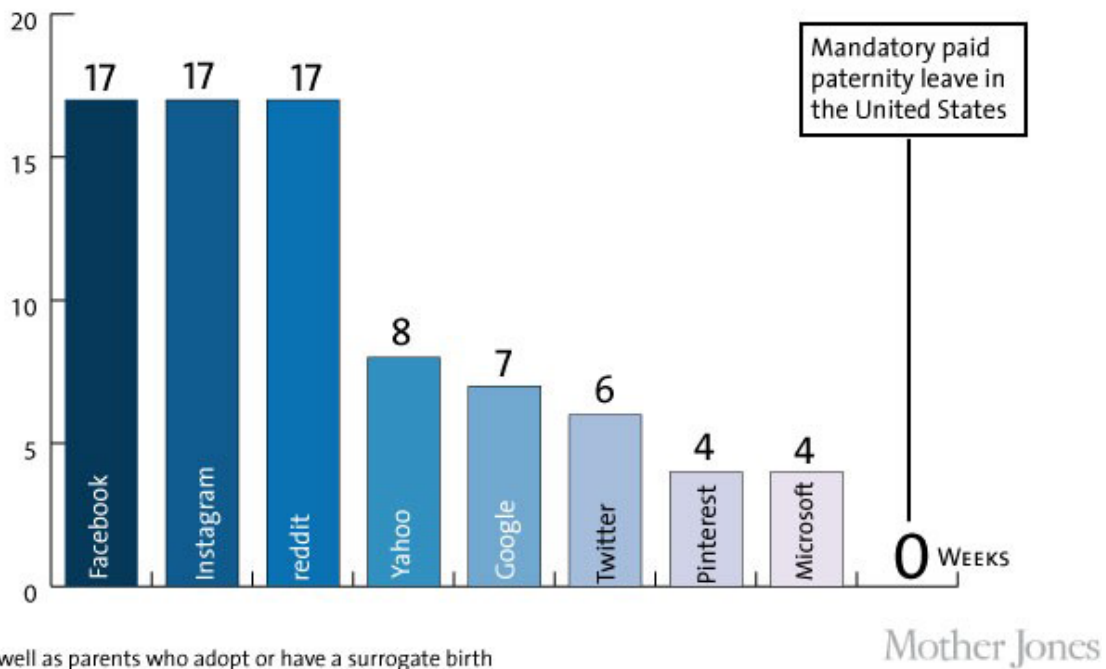


Figure 4: Family leave for mothers at tech companies

How Many Weeks of Paid Leave do Tech Companies Offer New Dads?*



*As well as parents who adopt or have a surrogate birth

Figure 5: Family leave for fathers at tech companies

5.4 Key Findings: Areas of Strength

It was recommended that all sites should also have a nursing room with a private refrigerator if one does not already exist—nursing rooms are already in place at all sites.

5.5 Key Findings: Opportunities for Improvement

5.5.1 Parental leave

The current parental leave policy at NRAO is 12-weeks, four of which are paid, during a 12-month period. Mirroring the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), if both parents are NRAO staff, the leave is shared.

With the current policy, two married employees essentially lose a benefit. The committee proposes that at a minimum, if both parents are NRAO staff, they received the full benefit that they would have had if their spouse did not work at NRAO. Specifically, 12-weeks leave (four of which are paid), regardless of the other parent's job status; however, the committee recommends a more substantial policy by extending the parental leave to eight weeks of paid leave (320 hours), which can be extended with supervisor approval by returning to work on a part-time basis. For example, six weeks at full time plus four weeks at half time, still totaling 320 hours. In this version of the parental leave policy, if both parents work at NRAO, they would receive a total of 10 paid weeks to be divided between both parents, at the parents' discretion.

5.5.2 Family sick time

The current NRAO sick time policy is that staff may use up to 80 hours of accrued sick leave per calendar year to care for seriously ill or injured family members. An additional 40 hours of accrued staff sick leave may be used for serious medical conditions with prior approval from the NRAO HR Manager.

The subcommittee recommends that if a staff member wants to move 40 hours of accrued staff sick leave over to family sick time, then 1) it can be for medical conditions up to and including serious ones and 2) it should be at the parent's discretion with notification to HR but not requiring approval.

5.5.3 Emergency operation status

The subcommittee recognizes that having NRAO open on days that schools are closed can be problematic for parents. While each site has their own policy regarding emergency operation status (EOS) and NRAO is not expected to follow school closures, the committee recommends that in some situations the status of the surrounding schools should be considered.

Furthermore, the committee recognizes safety is the highest priority and it is important that NRAO management communicate to staff that using leave during inclement weather is supported.

5.5.4 Work hours

The subcommittee recommends keeping meetings and talks to family friendly hours, specifically between 9:15 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. This would require moving the NRAOCV/UVA colloquium a half an hour earlier.

5.5.5 Child travel expenses

The subcommittee recommends allocating a travel fund for parents with children that are less than one-year-old. Staff can apply one time for up to \$500 for expenses related to child travel (caregiver travel, conference babysitting, etc.). This could apply to both internally and externally funded trips, in order to encourage finding external funding for travel for professional development. The goal is to help new parents travel to workshops and conferences with small children. Note that offering to provide child care on a onetime basis for NRAO-hosted workshops is an insufficient solution. Many parents do not feel comfortable leaving their children (especially very young ones) with a new, unknown caregiver.

The American Astronomical Society (AAS) provides [child care grants](#) of \$250 per family for those wishing to bring children (12 or younger) to the meeting. These grants can be used to cover airfare for a caregiver, airfare for children, costs for dependent care at the meeting, and costs for additional dependent care at home incurred due to a member's absence during the meeting. Similarly, CSIRO also offers [funding opportunities and grants](#) which include provisions for travel with children. Given the geographical reach of NRAO, providing child care grants of \$500 per family is not unreasonable or unprecedented.

5.5.6 *Child care*

The subcommittee recommends keeping a list of reliable and vetted sources of childcare options for traveling staff with children under two.

6 COMMUNICATION

Subcommittee members: Marie Glendenning, Vereese Von Tonder, and Connie Gallegos

6.1 Results and Analysis

Good communication is always important and the Climate for Women at NRAO survey is no exception. In particular, data from Questions 5, 6, and 8 indicate some uncertainty and disagreement.

Much of the survey data indicate a good work environment at NRAO which is due in large part to recent efforts by NRAO management, especially HR; however, communicating all significant and non-confidential efforts often and effectively is recommended.

Communication at the NRAO takes many forms and is most effective when the right form is used at the right time:

- All-Hands meetings
- Email lists such as allemploy
- Regular management/division meetings
- Supervisor and staff meetings
- PEP process
- NRAO policies
- Instructive presentations/Q&A sessions
- Bulletin boards
- Online training
- New staff orientation
- NRAO and AUI websites

With regard to the recruitment and selection part of Question 5, HR advertises job openings with professional organizations such as the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) and the Association for Women in Computing (AWC); however, survey results from Question 5 indicates that 16.5% of the survey participants are under the impression that women are treated less favorably in the recruitment and selection procedure. This illustrates that important Diversity efforts conducted by NRAO during a hiring process may not be communicated adequately to its staff including managers.

The NRAO PEP software now includes a task for reading critical and updated NRAO policies including these Diversity-related policies: Equal Employment Opportunity Non-Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Statement; the Affirmative Action Plan Veteran Non-Discrimination Statement; and the Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct and Workplace Bullying Policy. This step should help address the communication issue revealed in the Appraisal/Performance management section of Question 5 where 22% of the survey responses state that women are treated less favorably.

Further analysis of the Question 5 survey results highlights that 25% of respondents are unsure about whether men and women are treated equally in the workplace. This is an averaged number between the following areas: recruitment and selection, remuneration, appraisal/performance management, training and development opportunities, promotion opportunities, office assignments, parental leave, and effort required for recognition of contribution.

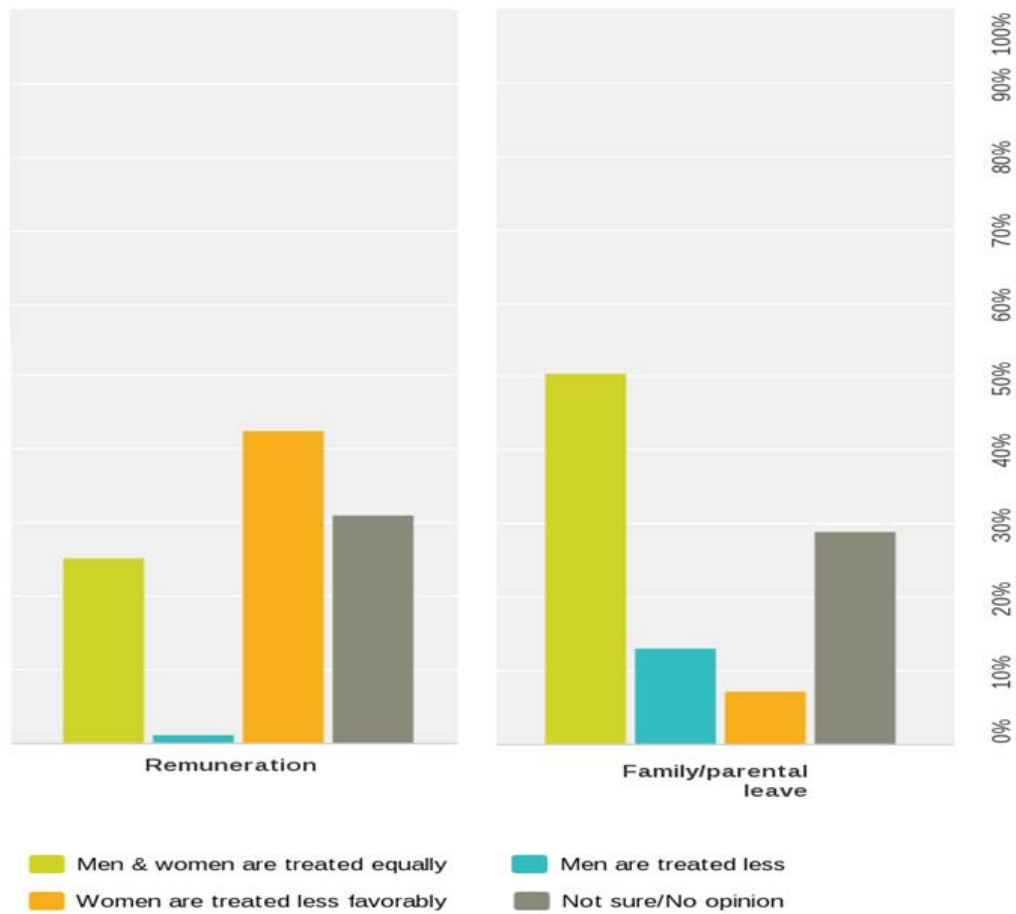


Figure 6: Illustration of the two worst case answers from Question 5

Question 6 asks whether “I know who to talk with at NRAO if I need to report a harassment incident, or discuss a gender-related issue.” The response data show that 11.5% of survey participants disagreed/strongly disagreed with this statement. Data were analyzed to see whether this problem was NRAO-wide or specific site; since there is a wide variance between the number of women working at the different sites, the data did not provide a useful answer to this question.

Characteristic	Subgroup	Population		Sample		Response Rate
		N	%	<i>n</i>	%	
Position	Astronomer/Scientist			16	18.82	
	Professional/Technical			19	22.35	
	Administrative Support			28	32.94	
	Management			23	27.06	
	Other			13	15.29	

Table 11: Reports of harassment by position

The NRAO web search engine does not effectively find information required by staff. For example, relevant search results are not found because an additional logon was required had no prompt. Additionally, even after the required logon, entering new search text in the Search box on the first search results webpage returns results for first search text instead of the new search text.

6.2 Key Findings: Areas of Strength

- Diversity presentation and information on bullying, harassment, and discrimination complaint procedure included in new hire orientation.
- All employee presentation scheduled for September 2016 on bullying, harassment, discrimination, and other observatory issues.
- Information about Ombuds representatives and Diversity & Inclusion Advocates (ODI Advocates) is presented at new employee orientation.
- ODI Advocates are announced at the beginning of each calendar year, including a link to the Advocate webpage.

6.3 Key Findings: Opportunities for Improvement

- Emails that notify staff of an open position should include information about the related external advertisements.
- Have HR do a presentation with a Q&A session on Diversity-related policies.
- Remind staff about the ODI Advocates and Ombuds representatives on a regular basis. Names and corresponding sites can be briefly stated in the actual email along with related URLs: <https://info.nrao.edu/do/odi/diversity-advocates-2016> and <https://info.nrao.edu/hr/ombuds>.
- Communicate that all harassment issues which occur at NRAO facilities should be reported to HR including incidents involving visitors.
- Include information about ODI Advocates, Ombuds representatives, and Safety at All-Hands meetings and/or at division meetings.
- Use facts to inform all NRAO staff about related equity efforts/reviews such as in the upcoming Compensation 101 presentations to be given by Shirley Franks.
- Diversity facts may be contrary to the perceptions of staff so presenting these facts in a constructive manner will support the Diversity values of NRAO.
- Communicate non-confidential research results about Diversity efforts at sister organizations conducted by HR/ODI to inform staff about the relative effectiveness of the NRAO Diversity efforts.
- Communicate to NRAO staff why only women were chosen for both the survey participants and its review committee.
- In the future, conduct non-gender specific surveys on, e.g., the issue of bullying.
- Create paper copies of future surveys to be distributed during the work day so that responses can be entered manually, taking steps to ensure confidentiality.
- Structure available responses concisely and unambiguously. This should be verified by employing more survey editors.
- Improve the NRAO web search engine.
- Renew communication about the AUI Ethics Point portal:
 - Add a module, much like a suggestion box, within the portal. This portal could be used both as an educational tool to promote ownership and empower all, and as a way for staff

to voice ideas, positive experiences, etc. Portal metrics could be measured annually to monitor the effectiveness of management efforts like diversity.

7 CONCLUSION

The Climate for Women at NRAO survey revealed a number of opportunities for improvement, but also revealed areas in which NRAO is doing well. One of the more positive outcomes from the survey is that there were few reports of sexual harassment. This is due, in part, to expectations for a respectful work environment. NRAO's Human Resources department has also made concerted efforts to raise awareness and provide education on dealing with harassment and bullying. These efforts are strongly supported, and the committee's recommendation includes continued education in this area. Employee comments proved useful for identifying issues and developing recommendations, particularly on family-friendly policies.

The survey contains several indications of the need for improved communication at NRAO. A review of the compensation and hiring procedure provided reassurance that salary disparity is more perceived than actual. Bullying and harassment training are high on the priority list for HR and ODI. The hiring process for the scientific staff is developing.

As part of an effort to improve communication about the issues raised in this survey, the committee recommends the establishment of a webpage that summarizes, or publishes in full, this report. Ideally, the webpage would also include a schedule for addressing the recommendations made by the committee, and status reports on actions that have been taken as a result of this survey and analysis.

It is also recommended that a subsequent committee be formed to evaluate the recommendations, determine how the recommendations will be addressed/prioritized, and develop a plan with timelines for implementation of approved recommendations.

Our final recommendation is to perform a follow-up survey in one or two years to determine whether gender-related issues at NRAO continue to improve. Employees are encouraged to provide specific feedback in future surveys to help pinpoint areas of concern. Specific recommendations are summarized below.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

8.1 Communications Recommendations

- Communication to employees at All Hands meetings:
 - Compensation and promotions
 - Ombudsman program, AUI Ethics and Integrity Line
 - ODI Advocacy
 - Reporting Bullying/Harassment
 - Report on Climate for Women survey
- Create more informational posters and distribute widely.
- Online:
 - Improve existing web pages and search tools.
 - Create within the web pages a feedback mechanism for suggestions.
 - List of reliable and vetted sources of childcare options for traveling staff with children under two.
- HR presentation with a Q&A session on Diversity-related policies including information comparing NRAO/AUI efforts with similar institutes.
- Furthermore, the committee recognizes safety is the highest priority and it is important that NRAO management communicate to staff that using leave during inclement weather is supported.
- Include more information in open position postings (e.g., where else this position is posted outside of NRAO).
- Structure available responses in future surveys concisely and unambiguously. This should be verified by employing more survey editors.

8.2 Training Recommendations

- Training to address perceptions and issues related to compensation/promotion:
 - Train supervisors and staff on compensation and promotions.
 - Provide professional training opportunities to encourage in-house advancement of women (track this in the PEP process).
- Training to address harassment/bullying concerns:
 - Include a review of all HR, diversity and safety resources, with special emphasis on ombudsperson/advocates and mandatory harassment training, in orientation of new hires.
 - Have annual refreshers at All-Hands and/or division meetings clarifying scope (e.g., incidents including visitors should be reported) and steps for reporting and management responsibility to respond to their staff in a timely manner.

8.3 Policy Recommendations

- Parental leave extension (increase to eight weeks; ten weeks to split for couples).
- Flexibility to transfer 40 hours of sick time to family sick time.
- Requirements for harassment reporting.
- Travel fund for baby expenses.

8.4 Process Improvements Recommendations

- Ensure that same effort goes into hiring at other levels (e.g., IT, engineers, technicians, trades, etc.) not just scientific staff.
- Keep job descriptions up to date.

- Encourage management per department to recognize on a monthly/quarterly basis staff who excel above and beyond their normal job duties.
- In the future, conduct non-gender specific surveys on, e.g., the issue of bullying.
- Family-friendly meeting times recommended (including change to colloquium scheduling).
- NRAO should articulate a commitment to training and professional development at all levels so that promotion from within is a core value.

9 REFERENCES

Survey method: Vagias, Wade M. (2006). Likert-type scale response anchors. Clemson International Institute for Tourism & Research Development, Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management. Clemson University.

Website Search Engine

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_enterprise_search_software

<http://www.predictiveanalyticstoday.com/top-open-source-big-data-enterprise-search-software/>

9.1 References for Family topic

Observatories	University (faculty)
Goddard leave policy	UVA faculty leave policy
Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory parental leave	CalTech leave policy
Space Telescope Science Institute leave policy	Harvard leave policy
Jodrell (Manchester) leave policy	Univ. of Texas leave policy
All UK Institutions maternity leave	Univ. of Pennsylvania leave policy
CSIRO leave policy	
All Canadian institutions maternity leave	University (staff)
NRAO parental leave	UVA staff leave policy
	CalTech leave
Industry	Harvard leave
Amazon parental leave policy	Univ. of Texas parental leave policy
Microsoft parental leave	Univ. of Pennsylvania parental leave policy
Adobe parental leave	
Google parental leave	
Facebook parental leave	
Netflix parental leave	

10 APPENDICES

10.1 Appendix A – Email to all women staff

Appendix D. Email to all women staff at NRAO, AUI, and the Office of Chilean Affairs

Sent on January 13, 2016, with additional reminders sent before the close of the survey.

Dear NRAO Employees,

One of our priorities at NRAO is to ensure that our workplace climate is welcoming and inclusive, and that it allows each of us to conduct our work comfortably and productively. To that end, a team of your colleagues – from across the Observatory, and representing various job categories and experience cohorts – developed a Climate for Women at NRAO Survey. Their charge was to design a survey that asks women employees about their experiences at NRAO, and their impression of the environment for women at NRAO. The survey link is provided below.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NRAOClimateforWomen>

The Climate for Women at NRAO survey will be available between January 13th and March 1st, 2016. Following the completion of the survey cycle, a committee will be formed and charged with reviewing the responses, identifying areas for improvement, and preparing a report that includes a summary of our areas of strength, as well as any identified issues and recommendations for improvement. If you are interested in serving on this committee, please send an email to Lyndele at lvonschi@nrao.edu.

We are looking forward to hearing from you.

Regards,

Lyndele von Schill
Faye Giles
Tony Beasley

10.2 Appendix B – Survey Instrument

Climate for Women at NRAO

Purpose of Survey

This survey was designed to explore the culture at NRAO from the perspective of women employees. The questions in this survey were suggested by a small group of employees, and may not be comprehensive. We recognize this risk, and have provided several opportunities for comments in order to capture a broader range of responses.

While the requested information may help us to identify areas in which improvement is needed, we are aware that some of you may feel some discomfort sharing potentially identifying information. For this reason, none of the questions require a response, and, in relevant cases, a "prefer not to answer" option is available.

Comment boxes are also included for those who may wish to provide more detail, or to make suggestions.

Please be assured that we do not have the ability to identify you through this survey, e.g., your IP address is not collected, but you may voluntarily elect to include your name or email address in your comments.

1

Climate for Women at NRAO

Confidential Questionnaire

1. Where are you in your career (number of years in your field)?

- Early career (0-10 years)
- Mid-career (10-25 years)
- Late career (25+ years)
- Prefer not to answer

Other or comment

2. What is your career path? Multiple answers are possible (e.g., Scientist & Management)

- Astronomer/Scientist
- Professional/Technical (Information Services, Engineering, Mechanical, etc.)
- Administrative Support Services
- Management
- Other (please specify)

3. Where do you work? *Remember - this survey is anonymous; providing this information could help us evaluate the climate for women at all the NRAO sites.*

4. Please let us know how much you agree/disagree with the following statements

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My voice is heard in meetings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My input is respected by my peers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My input is respected by my supervisor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My input is respected by senior management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have access to the tools/equipment/materials that I need to do my job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am given equal consideration for the 'best' (most valued) assignments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

5. Based upon your personal experience, do you think that men and women at your workplace are treated equally in the following areas?

	Men & women are treated equally	Men are treated less favorably	Women are treated less favorably	Not sure/No opinion
Recruitment & selection	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Remuneration (wages and other financial benefits)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Appraisal/Performance management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Training & Development opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Promotion opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Office assignments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Family/parental leave	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Effort required for recognition of contribution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

6. Please let us know how much you agree/disagree with the following statements

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Hiring practices at NRAO are transparent/fair, with regard to gender	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hiring committees make a conscious effort to treat candidates equally, regardless of gender or family situation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Workloads are equitably distributed regardless of gender	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know who to talk with at NRAO if I need to report an harassment incident, or discuss a gender-related issue	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
NRAO management will not tolerate sexual harassment and/or bullying	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
NRAO encourages a healthy work/life balance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

7. Have you experienced, or witnessed, any of the following behaviors at NRAO?

	No	Yes - experienced	Yes - witnessed
Bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual teasing, jokes, remarks, looks, and/or gestures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deliberate touching, leaning, cornering	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pressure for dates, letters, calls, and/or sexual materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stalking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Actual/attempted physical assault	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

8. If you answered 'yes' to any of the behaviors listed above, how did you respond, and how satisfied were you that your response addressed the issue?

Examples:

I asked the person to stop, and my request resolved the issue (Satisfied with response);

I asked the person to stop, and my request did not resolve the issue (Not satisfied with response), requiring further intervention which resolved the issue (Further action was needed, and resolved issue).

Please use the comments section to add additional information that you would like to share.

[Multiple responses are possible]

	N/A	Satisfied with response	Not satisfied with response	Further action was needed, but did not occur	Further action was needed, and resolved issue
Ignored the behavior and did nothing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asked/told the person to stop	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Avoided the person	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Made a joke of the behavior	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Threatened to tell	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reported the behavior to supervisor or HR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Went along with behavior	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

9. Please use this area to include any additional information that you believe might be useful as we assess the climate for women here at NRAO.

Thank you for completing this survey.

The responses to this survey will be reviewed by a committee between March 1 and July 31, 2016. The committee will be charged with reviewing the responses, identifying areas for improvement, and preparing a report that includes a summary of issues and recommendations for improvement. If you are interested in serving on this committee, please send an email to odi@nrao.edu.