

2021 COACHE Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey Analysis: STEP PLUS SYSTEM Custom Questions

The 2021 UC Davis COACHE Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey queried faculty about their perceptions of the Step Plus System. The Step Plus adjustments to the merit and promotion system were introduced in 2014 at UC Davis, so the 2021 survey presented an opportunity to gather faculty feedback about the implementation of the policy and its impact in their department and compare results from the first survey in 2017. This report presents an analysis of faculty responses to those survey items.¹

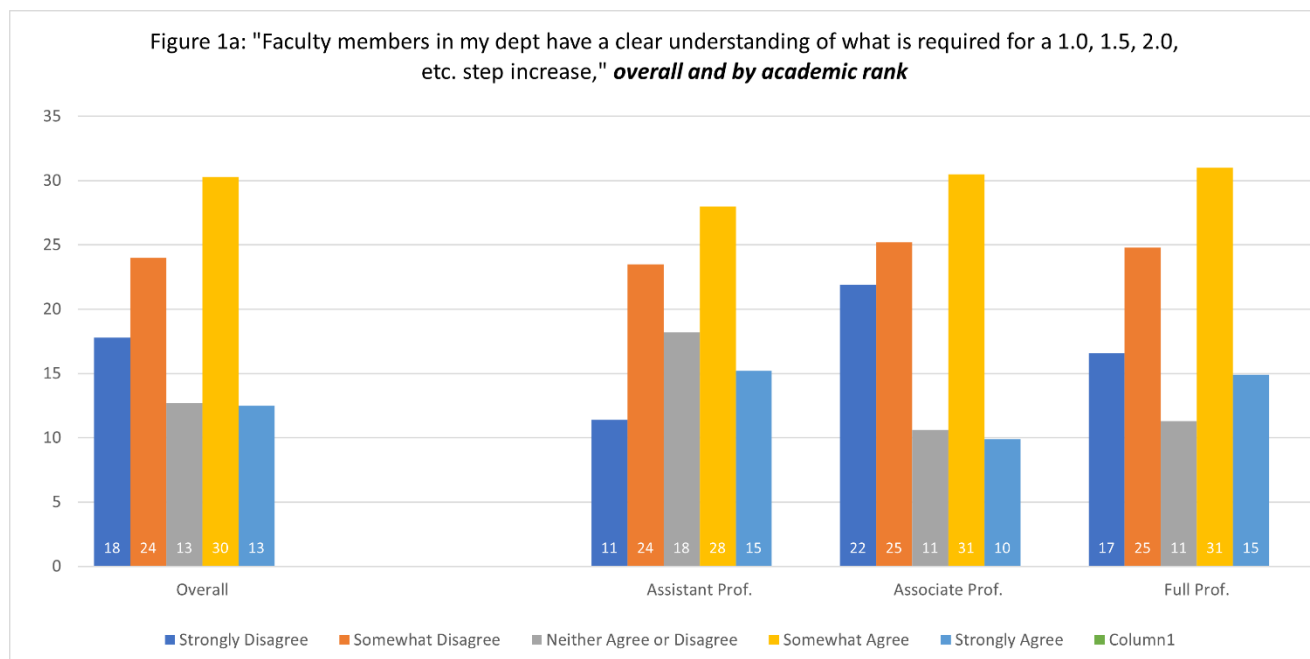
FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF STEP PLUS SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION:

To assess faculty perceptions about how the Step Plus program is implemented in their department, faculty were asked to report their level of agreement with the following statement:

- *Under the Step Plus system, faculty members in my department have a clear understanding of what is required for a 1.0, 1.5, 2.0, etc. step increase.*
- *Faculty members in my department are able to apply the standards consistently when reviewing candidates for advancement under the Step Plus system.*

Faculty evaluation of Step Plus understanding:

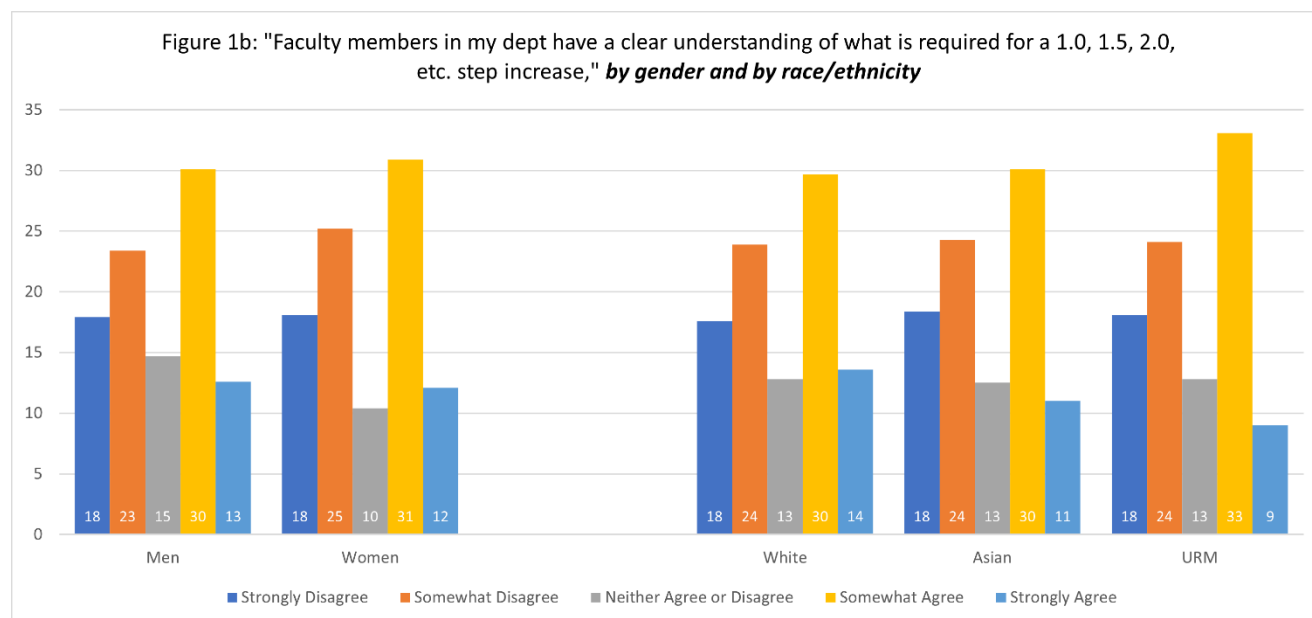
Among all survey respondents, there is an almost equal split between those who disagree somewhat or strongly (42%) compared to those who agree somewhat or strongly (43%) with the idea that their colleagues have a clear understanding of the requirements for step plus advancements (Figure 1a). Assistant professors are more inclined to agree that their colleagues have a clear understanding, while Associate professors are the most inclined to disagree.



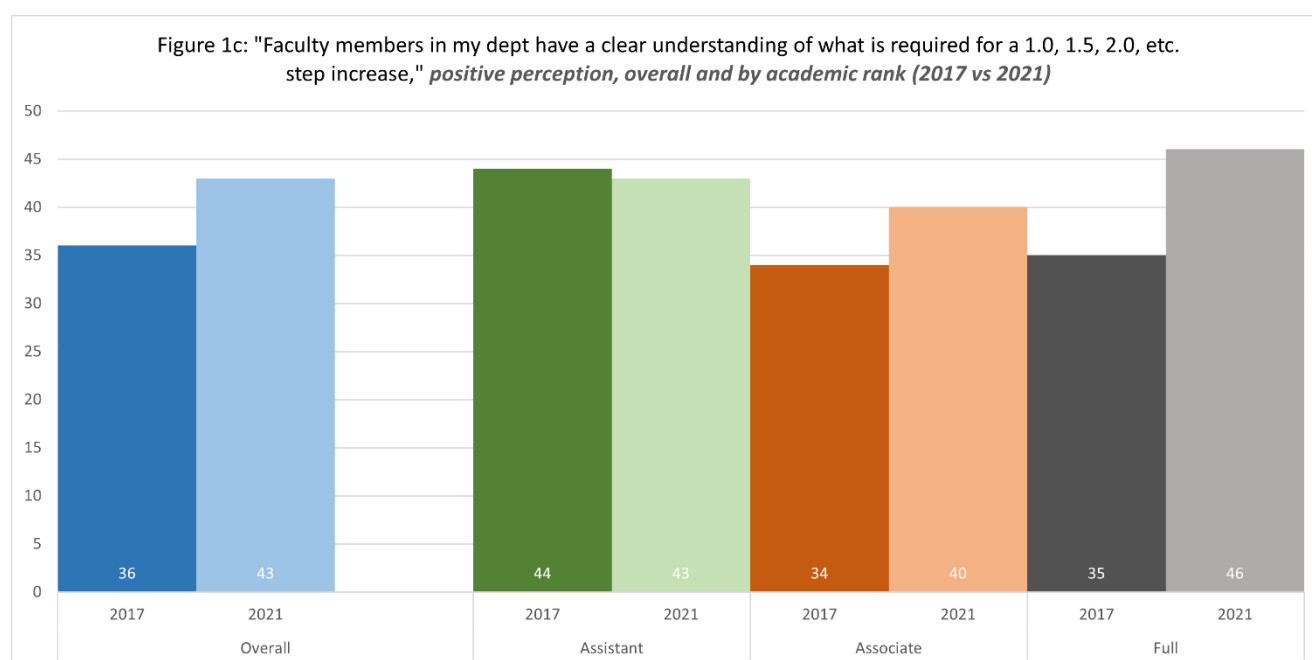
Faculty of all demographic groups are also split between whether their colleagues have a clear understanding of the requirements for step plus advancement (Figure 1b). When the “strongly

¹ Distributions in this report are based on 808 valid responses received for these survey questions (total number of responses = 998). Sample sizes for faculty subpopulations are: 398 full, 141 associate, and 122 assistant professors; 403 men, 378 women; 563 Whites, 123 Asian/Asian-Americans, and 122 Underrepresented Minorities.

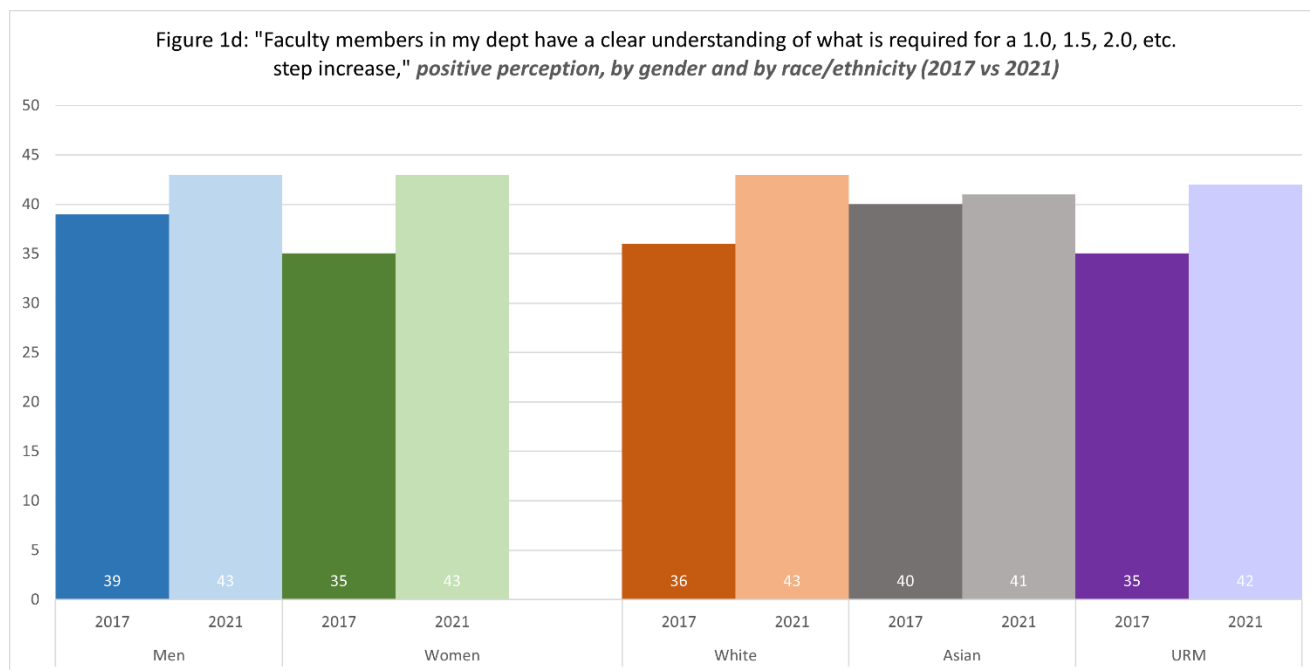
disagree” and “somewhat disagree” categories are combined there are no gender differences in the proportion of respondents who “disagree” nor “agree.” There also are no significant disparities in the proportion of White, Asian/Asian-American and URM faculty members who disagree versus agree with the idea that their colleagues clearly understand what is required for multiple-step merit increases.



Since the last distribution of the faculty satisfaction survey in 2017, we have seen increased positive perception towards the idea that faculty colleagues have a clear understanding of the requirements for step plus advancements among all ranks except for Assistant professors. (Figure 1c). Assistant professors have shown a slight increase in negative perception, with only 43% “agreeing” (somewhat or strongly) that their colleagues have a close understanding in 2021, vs a 44% agreement rate in 2017.

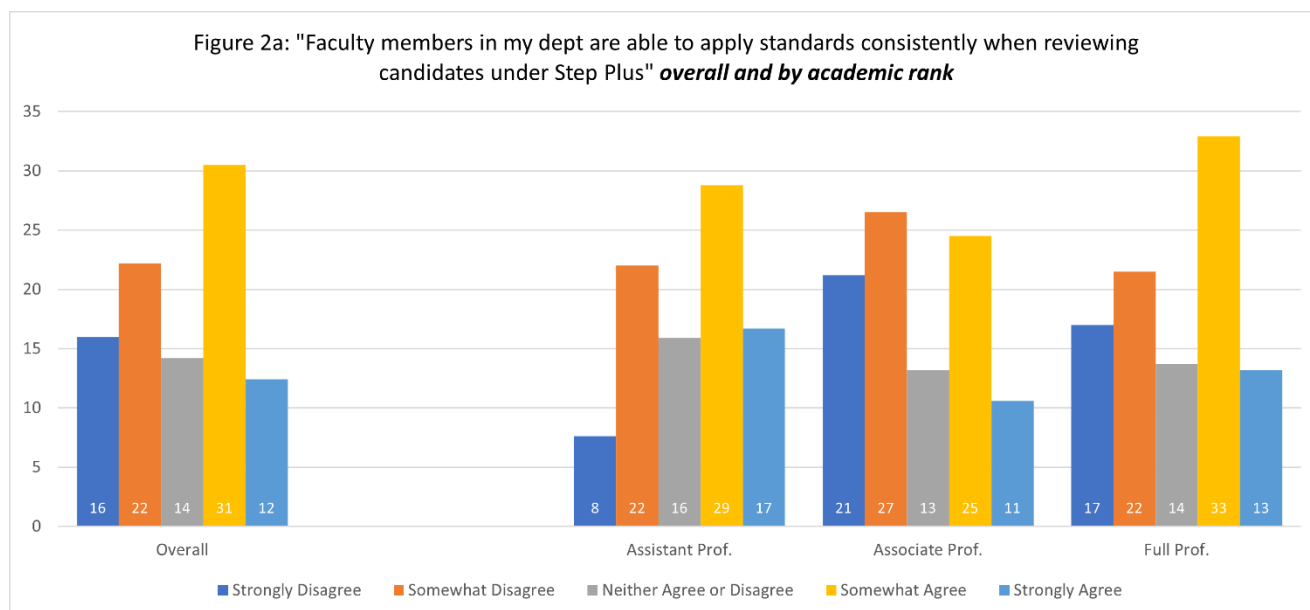


We also see similar positive perception amongst all faculty gender or race/ethnicity, with the most apparent shift from women and URM faculty (Figure 1d).



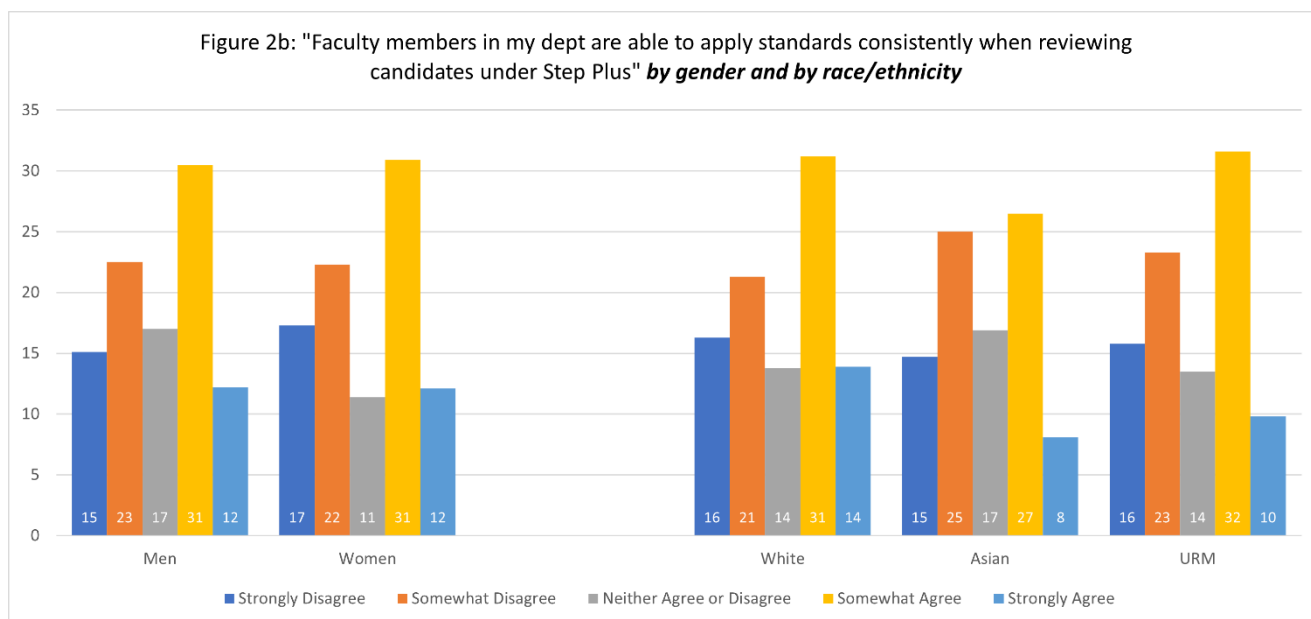
Faculty evaluation of consistent Step Plus implementation:

In response to the question asking if faculty agree with the statement, "Faculty members in my department are able to apply the standards consistently when reviewing candidates for advancement under the Step Plus system," 43% of all survey respondents agree somewhat or strongly (Figure 2a), compared to 38% who agree somewhat or strongly. The distribution of faculty who "disagree" and "agree" with the statement is quite stable across faculty rank, except that associate professors are significantly more likely than others to negatively assess their colleagues' ability to apply the standards consistently.

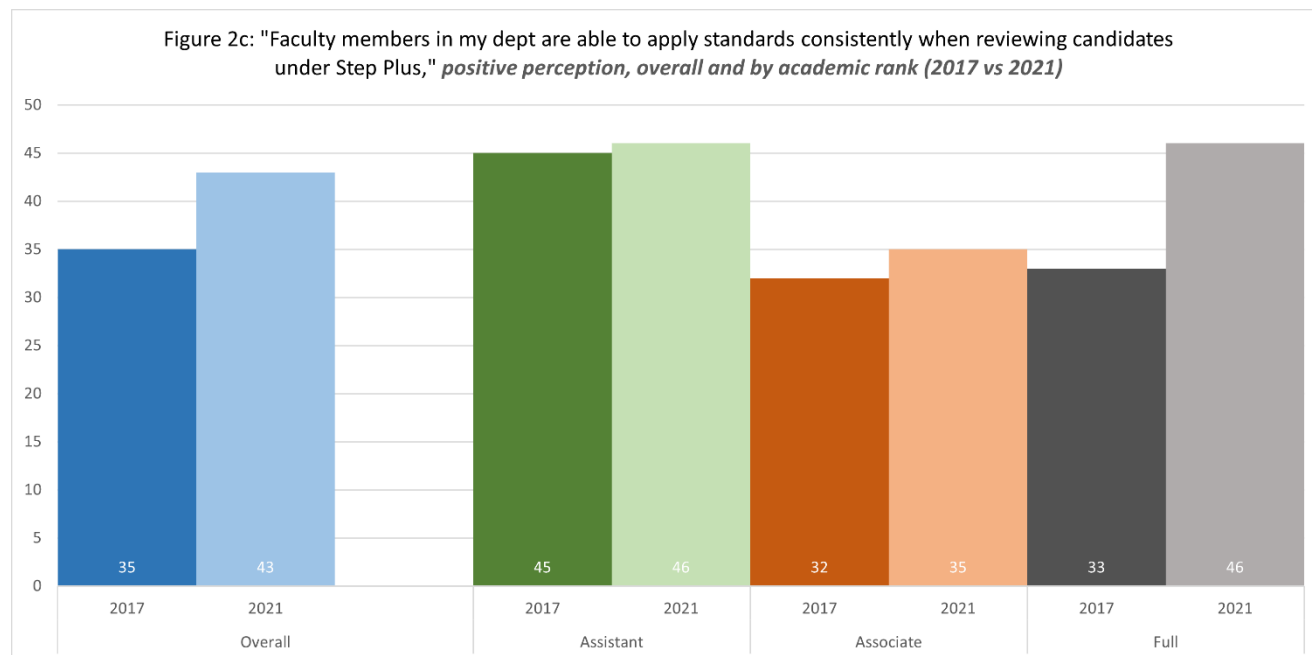


The distribution of respondents across the disagree versus agree response categories does not differ significantly by faculty gender or race/ethnicity with one exception: Asians are more likely than disagree (strongly or somewhat) than other ethnicity group with the notion that their departmental colleagues

are able to apply standards consistently (Figure 2b).



Compared to 2017, we see also see increased positive agreement across all ranks of faculty with the statement, "Faculty members in my department are able to apply the standards consistently when reviewing candidates for advancement under the Step Plus system," with the most noticeable difference for Full professors. Assistant professors have the lowest increase of positive perception, with only a 1% difference between perception in 2017 and 2021.



Similarly, the increase in positive perception is apparent across all genders and race/ethnicities, with the largest shift to agreement for White and Women faculty.

