

Research and findings relating to the commission of One Degree for the FORWARD Committee to evaluate trends and reasons that led to faculty leaving North Dakota State University.

Total Survey Size: 47	Participants: 18
<u>Men: 23</u>	Men: 10
17 STEM	6 STEM
6 Non-STEM	5 Non-STEM
<u>Women 24</u>	Women: 7
18 Stem	3 STEM
6 Non-STEM	4 Non-STEM

The amount of effort and time that was put into coordinating the participants was much more trying than anticipated. We used a combination of email and direct phone calling to coordinate the respective interviewees, but had a higher than anticipated negative response or no response. Nearly 25% of the sample population declined to participate while another 43% of the survey sample did not respond to any of our communication attempts. Four interviews remain uncompleted in which the participants responded favorably, but were then unavailable at a specific time when called, and further attempts to establish a time to connect did not materialize.

There were several comments from participants regarding a subsequent survey in which they had been asked to participate. We were unaware of additional surveys that were in progress, and several interviewees were confused about why they were being asked for an interview when they'd already responded to the survey. This may have contributed to the lack of participation for some individuals.

It is interesting to note the disproportionate unwillingness of STEM participants related to the non-STEM participants in not responding or declining the interview. We are not asserting any hypothesis for this trend, but rather that there may be other indices that may be worth looking into further.

Negative Responses

No response

Female	10	
STEM		8
Non STEM		2
Male	7	
STEM		6
Non STEM		1

Decline

Female	5	
STEM		5
Non STEM		0
Male	3	
STEM		3
Non STEM		0

Reasons cited for declining:

Completed an online survey	2
No reason given	2
Higher administration needs to be willing to discuss directly and sincerely	
If administration can't admit their mistakes, mistakes can never be corrected	
No time	
Not comfortable discussing reasons for leaving	
Do not believe I have information that will be helpful	
Interviewed with another publication on similar topic	
Legal settlement precludes participant from discussing his situation	

Our process with the participants generally involved a series of ten questions, building on each other, that allowed us to create an open dialog to get at the potential root causes of each participant's departure. Each question also allowed insight to some specific gender biased information.

The following is our assessment of the data and responses of the participants and is based on the qualitative interviews with the participants. This is not to be used or interpreted as a universal fact of the university but rather as a sampling which may indicate previous or current trends. Following our assessment you will find many of the actual transcribed comments of the individuals, less any descriptive comments that would readily identify them as a participant.

1. Could you tell me about your present position and your major responsibilities?

This was a baseline question in order for us to better understand their major responsibilities within the department and how their role relates to their current position. Because of confidentiality, we will not be providing this information as apart of the results.

2. How would you describe your work at NDSU in terms of teaching, research and service?

This question was to gather an understanding for how they perceived the balance of their respective roles, and to further discuss their focus, or the requirements that were placed on them.

3. Please tell me about your involvement with departmental, college, and/or university service at NDSU.

In discussing with the participants their involvement in the department, the college, or university, we found most participants discussed their relation with the departments as satisfactory.

However there was one noticeable difference when discussing this topic with the female participants from the non-STEM programs, in that there was a great deal of discussion surrounding their participation or requirements to participate in additional service responsibilities. Included in the discussion was how, prior to tenure, they were sheltered from service and committee assignments but that after their tenure the work load dramatically increased. Service seemed to be a non-component to the STEM participants.

What seems to be driving many of the comments in this question was not that there was not collegiality, but that there was a lack of clear roles, responsibilities, or vision within the department which may have given clarity to how they fit in as a faculty member.

4. In what way did your department support your ability to do research or scholarship?

Again the participants with a couple of exceptions felt generally supported by their department and their faculty. The overriding factor identified in the STEM subjects was not money or the time they were giving to the university, but rather the resources of space (specifically lab space) and necessary equipment. Without understanding each department, it may appear that this is an issue for the university in needing to create additional space for a research institution. But there may be territorial issues within departments that are unwilling to create the needed spaces or to work in spaces collaboratively.

For the non-STEM participants, there were two distinct topics that would have also increased their perceived support. For the Non-STEM Women, the issue revolves around time, and the requirements placed on them, and particularly that chairs and deans did not appear to hear or understand their concern. Some participants talked of working upwards of 100 hours per week without notice, concern or recognition, which again indicates a possible norm that may be accepted but unhealthy within the departmental setting. The Non-STEM men had more issues with authority, either of faculty within the department that limits their possibility, or administration that affects the larger system.

5. What were your views about the evaluation, promotion and tenure process at NDSU?

What was of interest is how, as we asked this question, the response was always related to tenure and promotion. With the exception of one individual, at no time did anyone mention or discuss the evaluation process, and the one individual thought the evaluation was a waste of time because everyone new there were no extra funds for raises. It is clear that evaluations are not used for their primary purpose which should be as a review of the past year's goals and expectations, and a planning opportunity for new goals and expectations.

The tenure process was defined by two groups: those who were in a tenure track position, and those who were not. The individuals who were not in a tenure track felt the process seemed fair, standard, and similar to other university procedures. Those who were participating in the process were not as favorable to the process. They described the process as scary, confusing, frustrating

and stressful. One individual described how the requirements changed three times during their involvement and another felt that the criteria were deliberately withheld. Several individuals talked about the use of power and authority playing into the process both at the department and administrative levels. This was universal in both STEM and non-STEM programs, and may suggest that a better defined process could benefit the overall system.

6. In what ways did others demonstrate that they valued your work?

This question looked at two different characteristics; rather than seeing how they were supported by the department or university, we were interested in how they were valued by either their department or the university. Although the comments looked relatively positive, it is clear that either they were unwilling to say how they were valued, or there was no clear feedback from their colleagues, department chairs or university officials as to how their role has a direct impact to the university. Feedback is critical as it relates to value. Some participants rated value as characterized by the evaluations that were received at the end of each semester that provided quantitative and qualitative feedback from students, but again, there is very little mention of significant value from any level of the university.

7. Did you feel stresses at NDSU? If so, what were they?

When discussing stress at the university, most participants acknowledged stress as part of the position, and most identified the daily work load as normal for the position. What did seem to cause stress were the re-allocated expectations of the positions that were left unfilled. Some previously mentioned causes, such as the need for lab space, created stress among many of the STEM participants. Other areas that created stress revolved around issues of diversity at the university. The two predominant diversity issues related to race (hatred/violence) and immigration, and the unwillingness or inability of the university to become involved to help resolve the related issues leaving the faculty to try and resolve the issues on their own. As it related to women (and identified by one male), was the manner in which the university handled pregnancy leave for faculty. Some individuals discussed how the university put pressure on them to return to a high level of research productivity shortly after having a child. The positive side is that many of the stresses that have been identified can be readily addressed by the university helping to alleviate future excessive stresses.

8. How did you feel about living in Fargo?

The overall theme regarding Fargo as a place to live is that we are a homogenous community. We are a nice, friendly culture that is well accepting of others who are similar to ourselves. We are not a culturally diverse community and the reality is that the university operates as a subset of our community. For 90% of the faculty, Fargo will be a fine community in which to live and work. There are those who, for other reasons like family location and preferred geography, leave the area. The role of the university must be in helping those with diversity issues to become better integrated in the community. The university should be honest and forthright about

expectations of living in our community and the support that can and will be provided by the university. The university should be creating opportunities and networks for minorities and non-indigenous ethnic groups to find support, allowing the community the time necessary for them to become integrated - which can be a slow process. For people working long hours, there may not be social outlets outside of the university setting; it may be beneficial for the university to provide some networking resources and help individuals find personal areas of interest outside of the university setting.

9. What were there underlying reasons that influenced your decision to leave NDSU?

Interestingly, while low pay was raised by several of the participants, for only 10% of those was that the primary reason given for leaving. In fact, three participants were specific and clear that money was not the issue – they'd been offered more money to stay and chose to leave anyway because they perceived that their concerns were not being adequately heard or addressed. It is notable that at a university desiring to become an upper tier research institute, 25% of the STEM participants listed lack of adequate (or any) lab facilities as the singularly most important reason they left. In addition to this concern, these same researchers took with them \$3 million dollars in grant funds.

Certainly there were some issues raised as the reason for leaving that NDSU can have little impact on such as needing to be closer to family, the added expense getting into and out of Fargo by air, and the weather.

On the other hand, issues of collegiality, workload expectations, lack of clear policy and/or inconsistent application of policy, and inequitable treatment of faculty based on gender or race are completely manageable; and visionary leadership engaged in strategic and implementation planning should be able to turn around these concerns in short order.

10. Is there anything that you would like to add about your time at NDSU

There were no consistent responses to this question. Just over half of the participants reiterated their primary reason for leaving the university in this question, suggesting a clarity of conviction about why they left:

1. could make more money elsewhere
2. being encouraged to look elsewhere when faculty member pressed an issue
3. concern about gender bias, males more respected than females
4. new faculty need more mentoring and positive feedback
5. issue of racial bias

One individual pressed the issue of racial bigotry, adding that the university does not recognize the depth of the issue. The rest of the comments range from a bias against this particular institution at the legislative level, to concern about a lack of authenticity of the president, to such mundane concerns as the weather.

One person commented on a lack of esteem on the part of the corporate entity that is the university. This is unique and notable because it represents the only statement where there was a sense of “we.” All the other comments and suggestions were more adversarial, even the positive comments separated the institution from the individual.

Question #2: Describe your work in terms of teaching, research and service.**Female/Stem**

- 40 / 45 / 15
- Continues to do real research but does not now feel constrained by impossible expectations.
- Current position is willing to fund ongoing lab needs.
- Valued the departmental citizenship
- 40/40/20

Male/Stem

- Developed 3 new classes/courses
- Was heavy on the teaching, difficult to do adequate research at the university because of a lack of resources.
- 40/40/20 NDSU; 80/15/10 Current
- 40/40/20
- Had an interest and focus on getting students involved in teaching

Female/Non-Stem

- After tenure, research expectations went up but also certain protections went away (specifically protection from much committee work, and a research assistant)
- 50/30/20
- Strictly a teaching appointment
- 60/20/20

Male Non-Stem

- 50/50
- Spread too thin
- 50/35/15
- Jack of all trades with regards to his teaching appointment
- Service was very low
- 40/30/30
- 40/40/20

Question #3: Please tell me about your involvement within your department, college and/or the university at NDSU.**Female/Stem**

- Felt very connected to the department
- Good social life
- Not connected to the city

Male/Stem

- Able to procure grants within the department
- Served on the Faculty Senate
- Worked to retain undergraduates
- Mentor for many students
- Personally had a research focus but was required to teach much more
- Collaboration within the department, but also schisms from the creation of a new grant.
- Good citizen within the department although there were a couple of individuals that he did not get along with.
- Small department, one faculty member that was perceived as a troublemaker, rest were very collegial

Female/Non-Stem

- Was involved in a high number of service responsibilities, faculty senate, promotion and tenure, grad committee, grad student advising.
- Was involved in a number of service and departmental responsibilities.
- As positions were terminated or people resigned –additional responsibilities were allocated to remaining faculty and not re-allocated until after their termination.
- involved in several committees in the dept, on faculty senate, was program coordinator

Male Non-Stem

- Grant funding was good
- Too much contention within the department
- Advised 17 undergrads, 4 grad students and completed 3-4 publications per year
- Department faculty were very established
- Very good relationship and respect within his department
- Was a junior faculty at NDSU and it was made clear that he was a Jr faculty member and therefore he should sit back and learn.
- Role with NDSU was a good “first” position.
- At first there was a lot of turnover within the department caused by a lack of leadership which was then filled by the administration. After that short lived episode, there became a good relationship within the department and the university.
- Just prior to his departure there was a demand for a lot of growth within the department resulting in a new doctoral program without any new resources being provided, which resulted in a lack of commitment from the bottom to the top of the department.
- Never felt a part of the department at all. Characterized the department more as a club.

Question #4A In what way did your department support your ability to do research or scholarship?**Female/Stem**

- Department was great
- Taught courses repeatedly
- Sr. Faculty helped Jr. Faculty
- Good sense of collaboration
- Not a large focus placed on hierarchy
- She was given no lab space or money to do her research, in spite of being PI or co-PI on about 2 million in grants. When she came, she assumed that would be part of the deal since her work is all about lab research.
- department chair and provost did not secure adequate lab space

Male/Stem

- Some colleagues were very worried about his needs and tried to support him
- Dean supportive
- Department chair was supportive, and unhappy with the actions of the Provost.
- Offered more money but not the resources necessary to do the job
- Supported his grant writing
- Chair looked for opportunities to make his role better.
- Financial support was made available for national committee travel
- Chair worked to allow faculty choices in developing class assignments
- Willingness of some faculty to take added teaching loads to allow others the time to complete research
- Collegial
- 4 different chairs and support varied by chair

Female/Non-Stem

- Help with the preparation of grants, as well as providing some group collaboration to successfully receive some new grants
- Found additional resources
- Provided a mentor
- Helped to develop needed resources
- Shared research
- Advocated in Legislation
- Her department was not supportive of her research efforts – they could not agree on what was quality research.

Question #4A In what way did your department support your ability to do research or scholarship? Cont.d**Male Non-Stem**

- Collaborative efforts
- Atmosphere was not friendly or happy, felt like you had to walk on egg shells around Sr. Faculty
- Challenging as a new faculty member, felt like you had to prove yourself first in order to be helpful or accepted.
- Allowed for some creative research and providing funds for research
- There exists a paternalistic (Daddy) or power, with a number of sons who will be the future 'Daddy' – this inequitable power structure was embodied in Schnell
- Was able to promote some general workshops for the department
- Compensation was good, was even offered a raise as part of a counteroffer prior to his departure.
- Was given the freedom to do research

4B What would have enhanced their support**Female/Stem**

- Were very supportive
- Gaining lab space

Male/Stem

- Providing adequate research space
- Teaching space
- Honoring promises made.
- New university priority to increase the level of research and academics was not well received by at least half of the faculty, but that changed with the transition to a new dean.
- Felt supported by the administration at a higher level.
- Provide more opportunities to improve grant writing skills (those that were provided were useless and even detrimental)

Female/Non-Stem

- After tenure, not require so much additional responsibilities and commitments
- As roles changed and demand on time greatly increased, no recognition for service, long hours and weekend work, even after they were able to voice concerns. (Position was re-split after the individual left)

Male Non-Stem

- University should be more nurturing such that chairs and deans (father-figures) protect young faculty (sons)
- The Provost wields power inconsistently
- When Chapman would come to visit there would always be an entourage to buffer the information flow.

Question #5: What were your views about the evaluation, promotion and tenure process at NDSU?**Female/Stem**

- Fair, felt the bar was appropriate.
- The process is fair and fine.
- The department was not helpful. When she put in her package for both tenure and promotion to full professor, at the very last minute the department suggested she only put in for tenure and not promotion. She felt pressured into rescinding the promotion application in order to preserve a good working relationship. She spoke later to both the dean and the provost – they were supportive of her for full professor and suggested that she should not have followed the advice of her department.

Male/Stem

- Scary, protected by those with power who use it to block those who meet the criteria for tenure.
- Provost has created kingdoms within the university system
- Fine
- Confused as to why he was being evaluated when there was common knowledge that there were no dollars available
- Actual tenure process was standard
- Evaluations were always reasonable (never had any further promotion after tenure.
- Mixed, first evaluation at 3 years was unduly harsh, done as a matter of practice to “give people a kick in the pants,” resulted in a loss of affection for NDSU
- Dean wouldn’t commit to specific requirements for tenure

Female/Non-Stem

- Fair – better than where she is now.
- Communication was good
- Not in a tenure track position but saw no problem with the process
- She was very frustrated with the evaluation, promotion, and tenure process. In the 5 years she was at NDSU, the criteria for tenure and promotion changed 3 times.
- She believes there is a significant gender bias in her department and when she expressed this and other concerns, it caused her department to not support her tenure and promotion application.
- the whole process is a good, old boy network.

Male Non-Stem

- Stressful because some individuals just want to make it difficult, because they don’t like you not because of your package or popularity.
- Did not go through the tenure process
- NDSU requires more for tenure than his current institution
- Good process, although he did not complete the tenure process
- Less bureaucratic at the current institution

Question #6: In what ways did others demonstrate that they valued your work?

Female/Stem

- Received lots of awards, vs current university where there are only two awards that require years of service to be eligible

Male/Stem

- Other departments recognized and appreciated his work more than his own department
- Offers of collaborative work
- Message from top was positive and supportive

Female/Non-Stem

- Department did well on this
- Good salary increase each year
- Told repeatedly that she was doing a good job.
- Supportive environment
- She believes she was valued by both the dean, and some of the faculty.

Male Non-Stem

- It took awhile to get any recognition and respect, no pats on the back
- Was provided opportunities for research with funds made available, as well as professional development funds to assist personally.
- Did not, Gorilla management, whereas current institution is very diverse and autonomous and they assume you are taking care of your job. Shared governance.

Question #7: Did you feel stresses at NDSU and if so what were they?**Female/Stem**

- Normal as part of the faculty in that there is always too much to do.
- Caused by a personal sense of what needed to get done.
- Did feel stress at NDSU, she worked about 100 hours/week.
- Frustrated at not getting very high teaching evaluations from undergrads, grad students consistently gave her high teaching evaluations.
- Treated inappropriately by a faculty member in her department

Male/Stem

- Some students felt that his classes and philosophy were too hard.
- Received racial slurs from some students
- Lack of lab space required that he spend time at other universities in order to get his work done
- Lack of understanding or support in terms of racial discrimination
- 90% budgets
- Weak department chairs created stressful conditions

Question #7: Did you feel stresses at NDSU and if so what were they? Cont'd**Female/Non-Stem**

- inconsistent with issues relating to pregnancies, unsupportive, demanding
- high
- She did feel stress but didn't feel that it was unusual. Travel was stressful but not unduly
- In her last year, a faculty member who was not promoted blamed her. This person stalked her, and her concerns about this behavior were ignored by her chair and others at the university. She finally reported it to the police and they dealt with it.

Male Non-Stem

- Sr faculty told other faculty not to work with him
- No help in getting a permanent status from the university
- Out of pocket costs working with attorneys \$6500 to deal with immigration issues
- End the push for growth without providing the necessary resources
- Not a good environment to work in.

Question #8: How did you feel about living in Fargo, and how would you describe the stereotype of Fargo to others?**Female/Stem**

- Not happy, Democrats living in a sea of Republicans
- Felt that she did not fit into the city, expectation that women had children and attended potlucks.
- Liked living in Fargo- cold weather was no problem, and preferred it to warmer climates
- Fargo is a quiet and friendly place

Male/Stem

- Good schools, great city and neighbors.
- City can't handle the tensions created with diversity.
- Times when he really liked it, low crime, good faith, good place to raise a family
- Lack of outdoor resources: mountains, local lakes.
- Loved it, likes living in small cities and the connections it provides
- Missed some of the diversity as a result of our inherent culture
- Relaxed, friendly, comfortable
- Mixed – typical Midwest city with all the same restaurants and stores as every other city
- People naturally friendly, reasonably safe
- Homogenous culture so racial tension was minimal
- Hated the weather, winter not so severe just too long

Question #8: How did you feel about living in Fargo, and how would you describe the stereotype of Fargo to others? Cont'd

Female/Non-Stem

- Friendly people
- Being isolated from family led to the start of their own family (positive)
- Hard working
- People are self-deprecating
- Great place to live
- Homogenous
- Flourishing community
- Access to other resources in Winnipeg and Minneapolis
- she liked living in Fargo, in fact she has moved back here since her new position is in the area.
- thinks the comments in the recent Chronicle of Higher Ed piece about cold weather and single women are “silly.”

Male Non-Stem

- Was a good place to live with lots of opportunities.
- Rough at first, physically attacked by one individual, no university support
- Lots of harassing calls in his office late at night, campus police not helpful
- Hitler propaganda left at his home.
- Genuine
- Great place for family life.
- It is cold and sometimes you feel isolated.
- Cold
- Town was fine, but a single female may not have the same positive experience (it is a town for married people)
- Hard to get out of Fargo (distance/Cost)
- Homogeneous culture, and the current population is comfortable with that.
- Nice and friendly, you're welcome to be just like everyone but the culture is unwilling to adapt to you (change).

Question #9: What was the underlying reason that influenced your decision to leave NDSU?**Female/Stem**

- Desire for more diversity
- Recognition of maternity leave as a valid reason for diminished research productivity
- Lateral move at the time in terms of pay but has since grown five times as much as her increases would have been at NDSU
- the lack of lab space
- No money to purchase equipment, which was necessary to apply for some grants
- NDSU refused to sign contracts for her to do collaborative work with a large, globally competitive company so she had to turn down grant money and work opportunities in her specific discipline

Male/Stem

- Lack of lab space
- University issues became personal in the eyes of other administrators.
- Cold – duration of the winters
- Isolation – more of a town than a city, proximity to other research institutions
- Not as much ROI support for grants as there should be
- Roadblocks that should have been easily addressed – with research and data support
- Missed relationships from previous university relations
- In his first interview the chair stated “ that you don’t have to stay;” implying that the university has/had a willingness to ask for less than you need
- Parents (kids able to visit more frequently)
- Lifestyle interests (Cultural events)
- Money (60% increase)

Female/Non-Stem

- Closer to family
- Could not handle the continued work load that was expected.
- No progress in refilling vacant positions
- Process that was used to preclude him an opportunity to place his name in a search position, university did not follow its own procedures for the listed job qualifications.
- Asked to reapply for a position after they left the university but not considered while they were employed
- gender bias, a good old boy network that would keep her from doing well.

Question #9: What was the underlying reason that influenced your decision to leave NDSU? Cont’d

Male Non-Stem

- Family situations, wife living outside of the FM area.
- Visa status
- Concerns for children's safety
- Current position is a better fit professionally, and the students are not limited in their abilities.
- Pay was very low for the level of experience that was brought
- Be closer to aging parents
- Pay was an issue but not a breaking issue
- Missed the mountains

Question #10: Is there anything that you would like to add about your time at NDSU**Female/Stem**

- Was recruited at a competitive salary but at mid career was underpaid
- she didn't feel that she could recruit grad students from the pool of students at NDSU, and the students she recruited from her previous jobs ended up leaving to go to other universities.

Male/Stem

- Was encouraged to look elsewhere when he pressed one university official to honor a promise
- Currently making twice as much salary wise but is not able to save as much given the cost of living.
- Institution has a low sense of self esteem.
- Legislature always talking about the "fat cats" of Fargo and faculty. Never felt that our government supported the university. As such left a bad taste.
- University does not understand the depth of some of the issues it faces
- When faculty are offered a position, it should be assumed they are good enough to get tenure

Female/Non-Stem

- her concerns about gender bias were limited to her department. She did not find the same biases with Schnell or the Extension and Ag administrators she worked with.

Male Non-Stem

- Jr. Faculty need a more positive environment to become established in.
- Dept chair should take responsibility for new faculty integration.
- When he was applying he was told how Fargo is such a great place to raise kids, to the point that it was almost an insult to suggest that you would raise them anywhere else (be careful the way you market yourself)
- Chapman had the right rhetoric but was ultimately unwilling to engage in and would often shut down conversations