



April 2024 Newsletter

Exciting News! All three universities have been granted an extension! AGEP-NC will continue through May 2025.

2024 Summer Alliance Meeting

When: Friday, June 28, 2024

Where: UNC Charlotte Student Union

This meeting is for all interested deans, administrators, department heads, faculty, graduate students, and AGEP-NC faculty fellows.

[RSVP Here](#)

UNC Charlotte Department of Mechanical Engineering and Engineering Science (MEES) AGEP-NC Department Plan

We are excited to announce that the MEES Department has developed and adopted a plan to promote the success of diverse doctoral students. A few actions that are already underway:

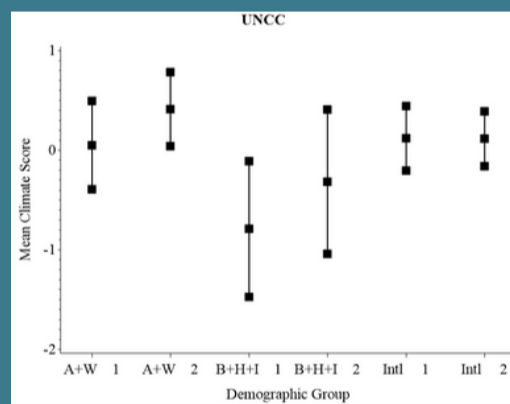
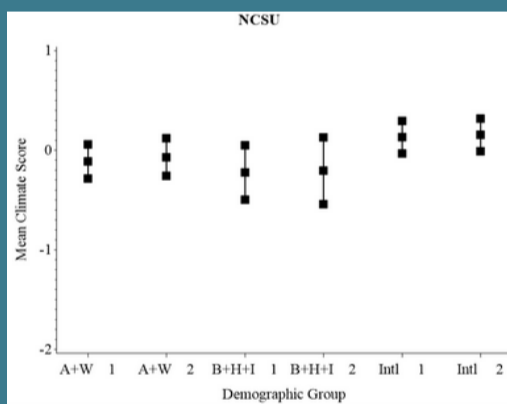
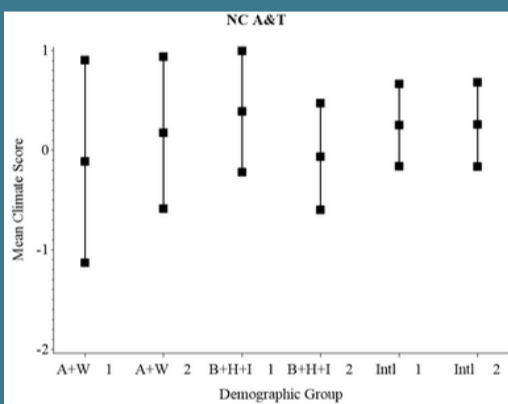
- Increase the graduate assistantship stipend
- Change the format of the math qualifying exam
- Provide special customized training opportunities for students interested in academic careers

The full plan is available online at <https://agep-nc.org/index.php/department-plans/>.



Climate Survey Results

Using data from about 1800 surveys administered at the beginning and end of each fellow's two year term, undergraduate research assistant Andrea Stancescu conducted an exploratory factor analysis. Sixteen survey questions* loaded highly on factors related to department climate. Subsequent factor analysis of those 16 questions was used to create a "climate factor," and then a "climate score" was computed for each individual student at each time point. We found that, averaged over all three institutions, international students rated the climate more highly than Black, Hispanic and Indigenous students (p-value = .0075, analysis of variance details available upon request). At NC State, international students' mean scores were significantly higher than either White and Asian students (p-value = .048) or Black, Hispanic and Indigenous students (p-value=.062). No other group differences reached statistical significance. Mean climate scores with 95% confidence intervals are shown in the graph below for each demographic group**. Note that the width of the confidence interval and the ability to detect differences between groups depends on the number of respondents; groups with more respondents have narrower confidence intervals and greater power for detecting differences.



*Survey questions: I am aware of places or people to go to if I am faced with a problem or issue in the department; I understand what my faculty advisor expects of me; I am satisfied with the quality and quantity of feedback from my advisor; My advisor respects my opinions and contributions; I feel safe voicing my feelings to my advisor; My department is a welcoming place to learn and work; I trust the people in the department who make decisions that affect me; I feel reasonably accommodated when my personal and professional responsibilities are in conflict; My department emphasizes the importance of demographic diversity; I would recommend this department to other students or postdocs; Rate my relationship with my advisor; Rate my relationships with faculty other than my advisor; Rate my relationships with other grad students; Rate the environment in the department for minority students; Rate the environment in the department for women students; Rate the opportunities to build a strong network.

**A+W = US Asian and White; B+H+I = US Black, Hispanic and Indigenous; and Intl = International; Survey 1 was taken at the beginning of the AGEP-NC faculty fellow's term and Survey 2 was taken two years later.

Hannah Estes & Andrea Stancescu



Our two student interns are graduating! We are grateful to Andrea Stancescu and Hannah Estes for their contributions to the AGEP-NC project. Andrea has been with AGEP-NC since August 2021 working with process evaluator Cathy Brawner on preparing and reporting the climate survey data. She will be joining NC State's Statistics doctoral program in the fall.



Hannah has served this academic year as our communications guru. She has kept the AGEP-NC newsletter and website current and has especially helped with the technical aspects of the website management. Hannah will be joining NC State's Computer Science doctoral program in the fall. Congratulations to Hannah and Andrea!



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