

“Attitudes Toward Interdisciplinary Research” Faculty Survey Results

Summary:

“Attitudes toward Interdisciplinary Research” faculty survey led by Brenda Zierler, Jonathan Posner, and a group of team science researchers from the Institute from the UW Institute for Translational Health Science (ITHS). We partnered with 7 schools/colleges (the 6 Health Sciences Schools and the College of Engineering) to address attitudes about promotion and tenure within the context of interdisciplinary research in our most recent survey. We received responses from 118 faculty. We do not have a response rate as the survey was administered via listservs at each school by appointment, promotion and tenure (APT) representatives.

From the survey results, we found that interdisciplinary research collaboration (IRC) is valued and a high percentage of faculty are in support of or already performing IRC; however, there is a lack of infrastructure and no policies supporting it. Also noted was a lack of awareness by school/college APT committees on what constitutes interdisciplinary research and how it was evaluated since most criteria for appointment and promotion focus on an individual’s accomplishments (e.g. numbers of grants, manuscripts, presentations) and not a team’s productivity or discoveries. Faculty perceive a lack of recognition and reward for being an interdisciplinary researcher. For example, one faculty member commented, “Our school values but does not support Team Science”, while another stated, “our APT committee is clueless about Team Science”. We found that best practices are not being identified and/or replicated across schools and colleges at UW. Detailed survey results can be found in the Appendix (pages 4-10).

Acronyms:

- IRC – interdisciplinary research collaboration
- APT – appointment, promotion and tenure

**“Attitudes Toward Interdisciplinary Research”
Faculty Survey Results**

Themes:

The following categories were identified in response to the two survey questions that prompted an open-ended response.

1. *What feedback have you received (formally & informally) about promotion as it relates to IRC?*
N=79

Theme	Subthemes
Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. General support of IRC B. Department or Chair only C. School only D. Promotion/Tenure Committee
Recognition and Reward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Independent research rewarded above IRC B. Need both independent and IRC C. Lead PI or lead author
Difficulty in operationalizing IRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. No criteria/exemplars or guidelines B. APT Committee not knowledgeable C. External Reviewers struggle D. Preparation of APT materials (how to describe individual contributions) E. No infrastructure support (policies/procedures)
Evaluation of IRC (promotion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Recognize individual’s contributions B. Use Impact measures besides PI/number of manuscripts
Timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Need to establish independent research first B. Wait until “tenured” before doing IRC C. There has been change over time in how IRC is viewed/perceived
None	

**“Attitudes Toward Interdisciplinary Research”
Faculty Survey Results**

2. *From your perspective, what are the resources and policies (infrastructure, space, time, money, administrative support, etc.) in place that supports IRC from your department, school or college?*
N=81

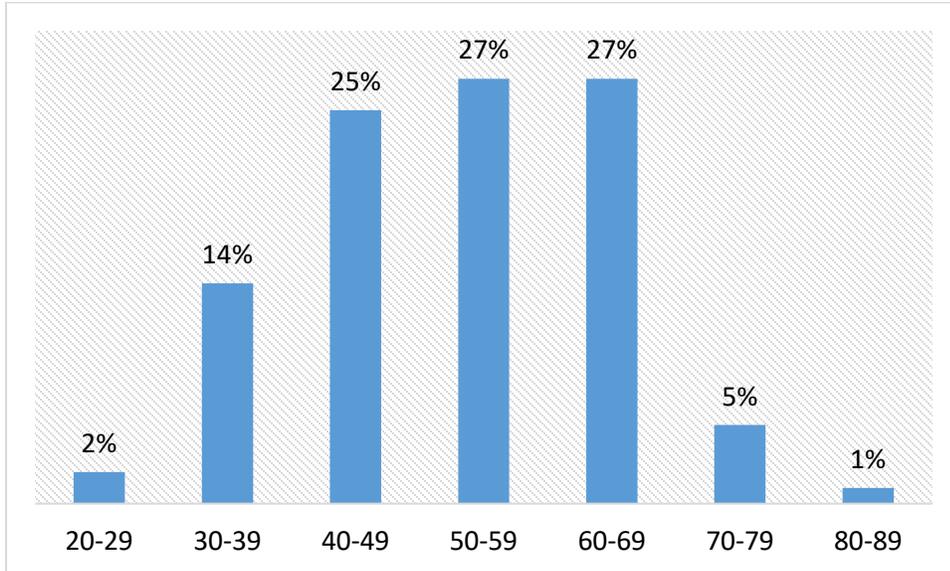
Theme Supports of IRC	Subthemes
Infrastructure	E. Space F. Shared facilities (lab, office) G. Research Centers H. Meeting rooms/conference
Personnel	D. Chair E. Dept. Administrators F. Mentors G. Grants Management Staff H. Graduate students
Policies	F. Shared IDC G. Recognize co-PIs H. Co-location I. MOUs J. Adjunct positions
Financial	C. Work load release (time) D. Consultants E. Pilot funds F. Matching funds G. Sub-budgets
Individual Initiated	
External	A. Federally funded IRC grants B. Private Foundations
Cultural	A. Encouragement to conduct IRC
Unknown	

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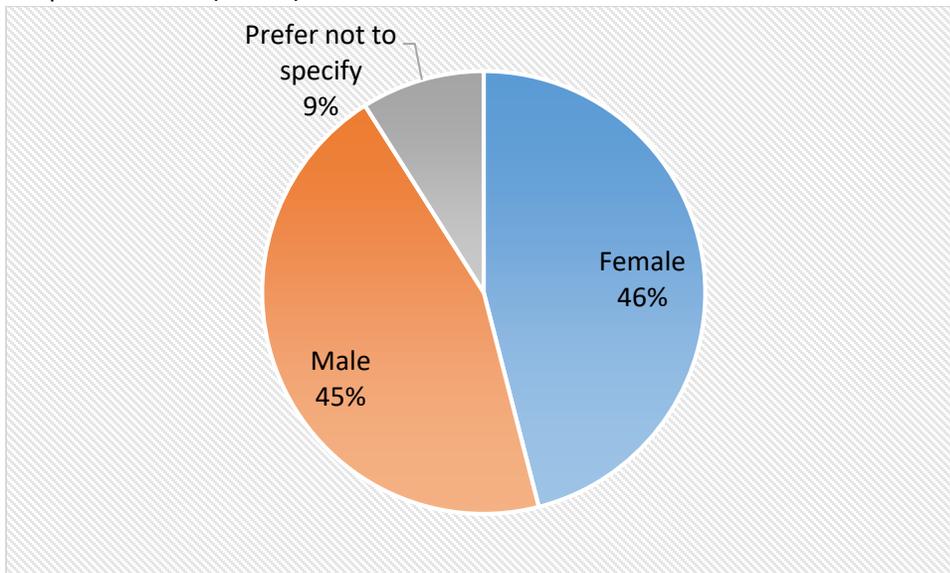
Appendix

I. Demographics

Graph 1: Age Range (n=117)

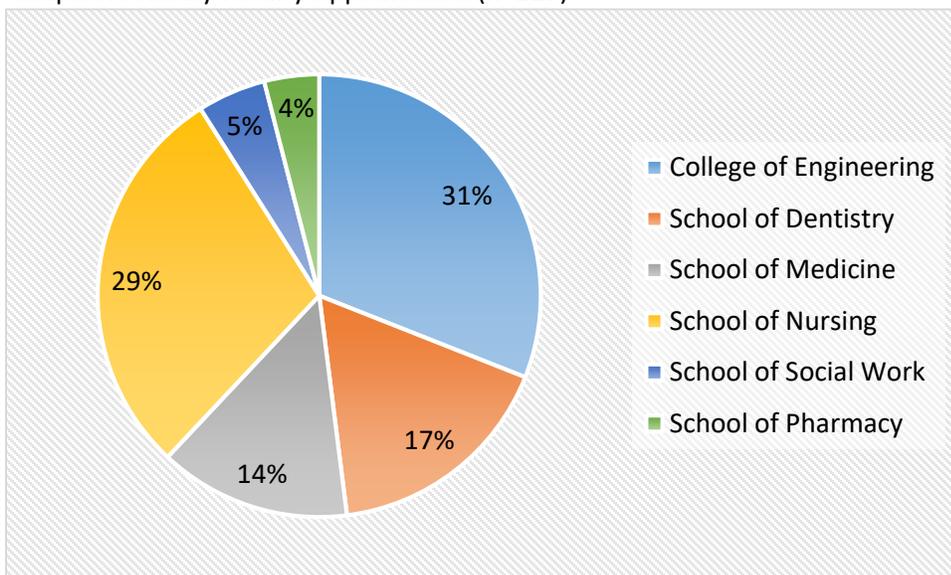


Graph 2: Gender (n=118)

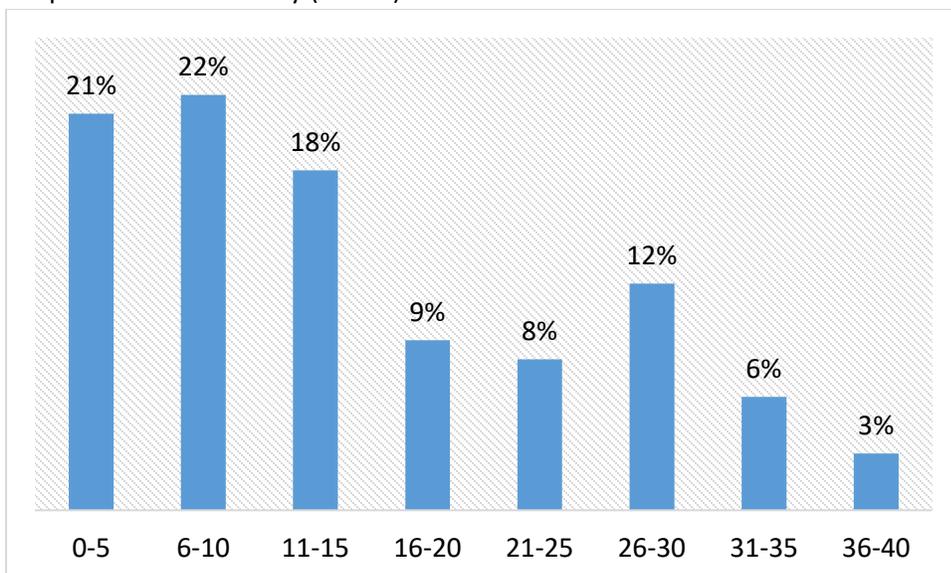


“Attitudes Toward Interdisciplinary Research” Faculty Survey Results

Graph 3: Primary Faculty Appointment (n=117)

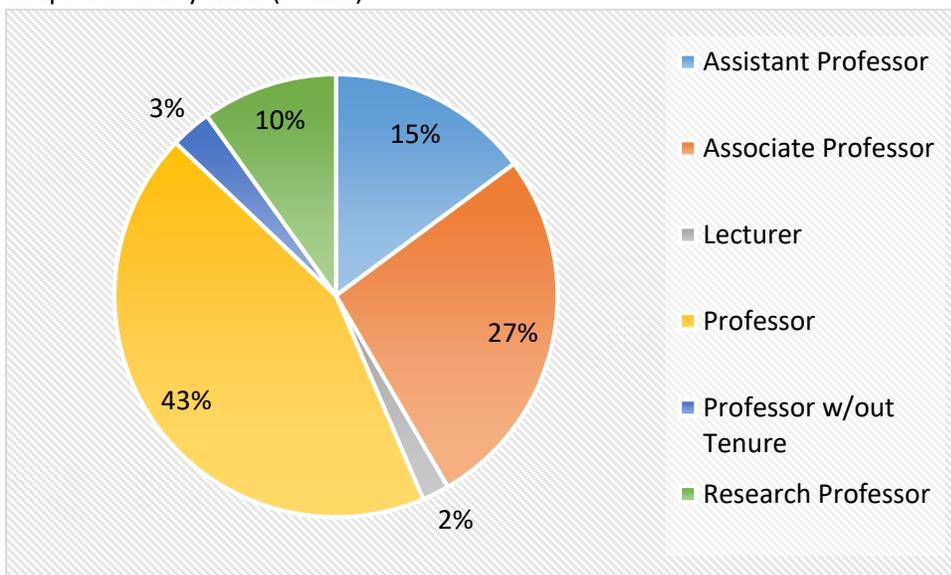


Graph 4: Years as Faculty (n=117)

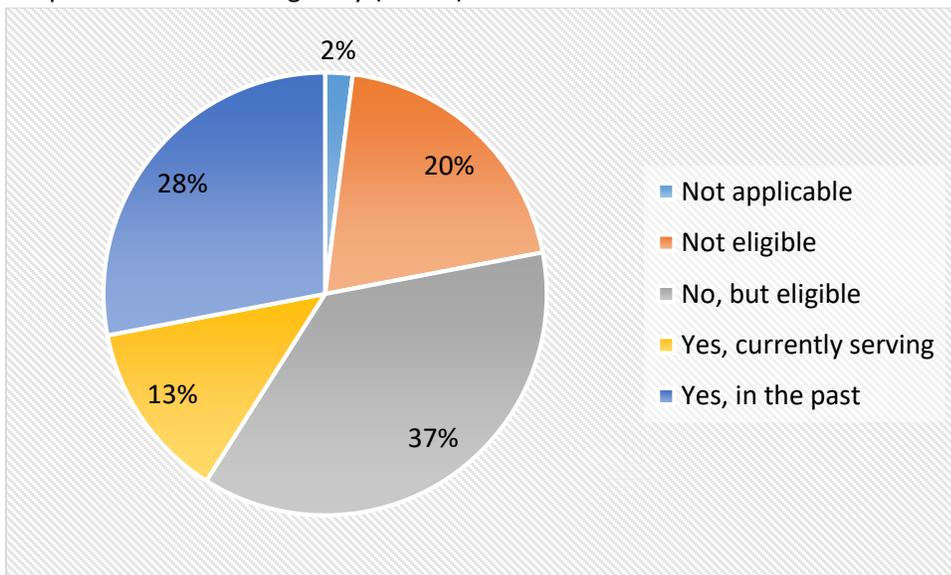


"Attitudes Toward Interdisciplinary Research" Faculty Survey Results

Graph 5: Faculty Rank (n=117)

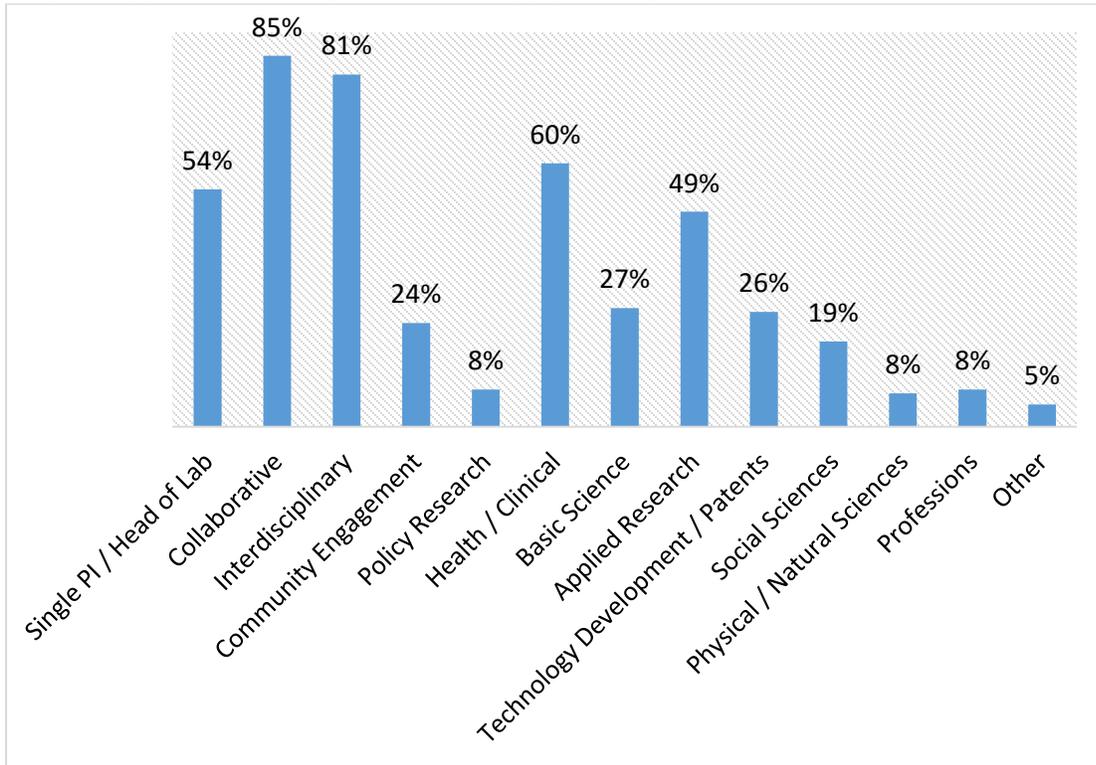


Graph 6: APT Service Eligibility (n=118)



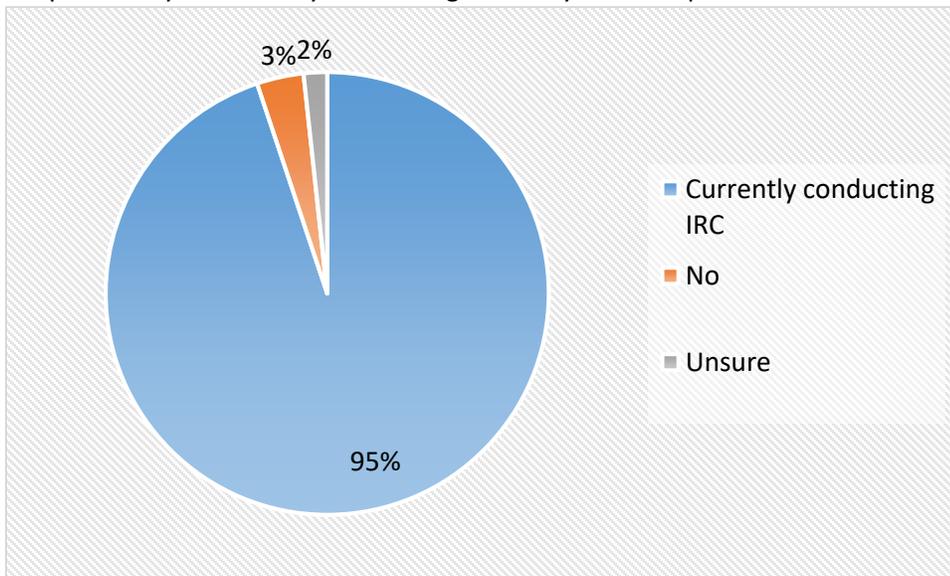
“Attitudes Toward Interdisciplinary Research” Faculty Survey Results

Graph 7: Type of Research (check all that apply; n=118)



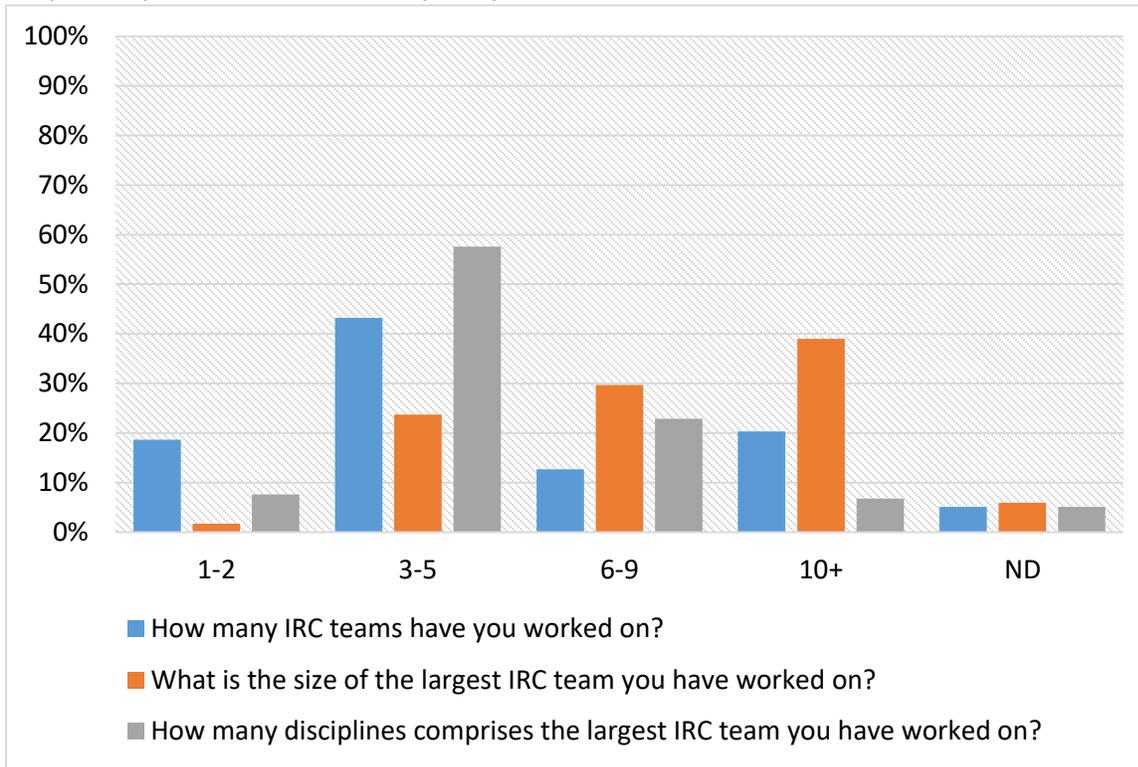
II. Interdisciplinary Research

Graph 1: Are you currently conducting or have you in the past conducted interdisciplinary research?



“Attitudes Toward Interdisciplinary Research” Faculty Survey Results

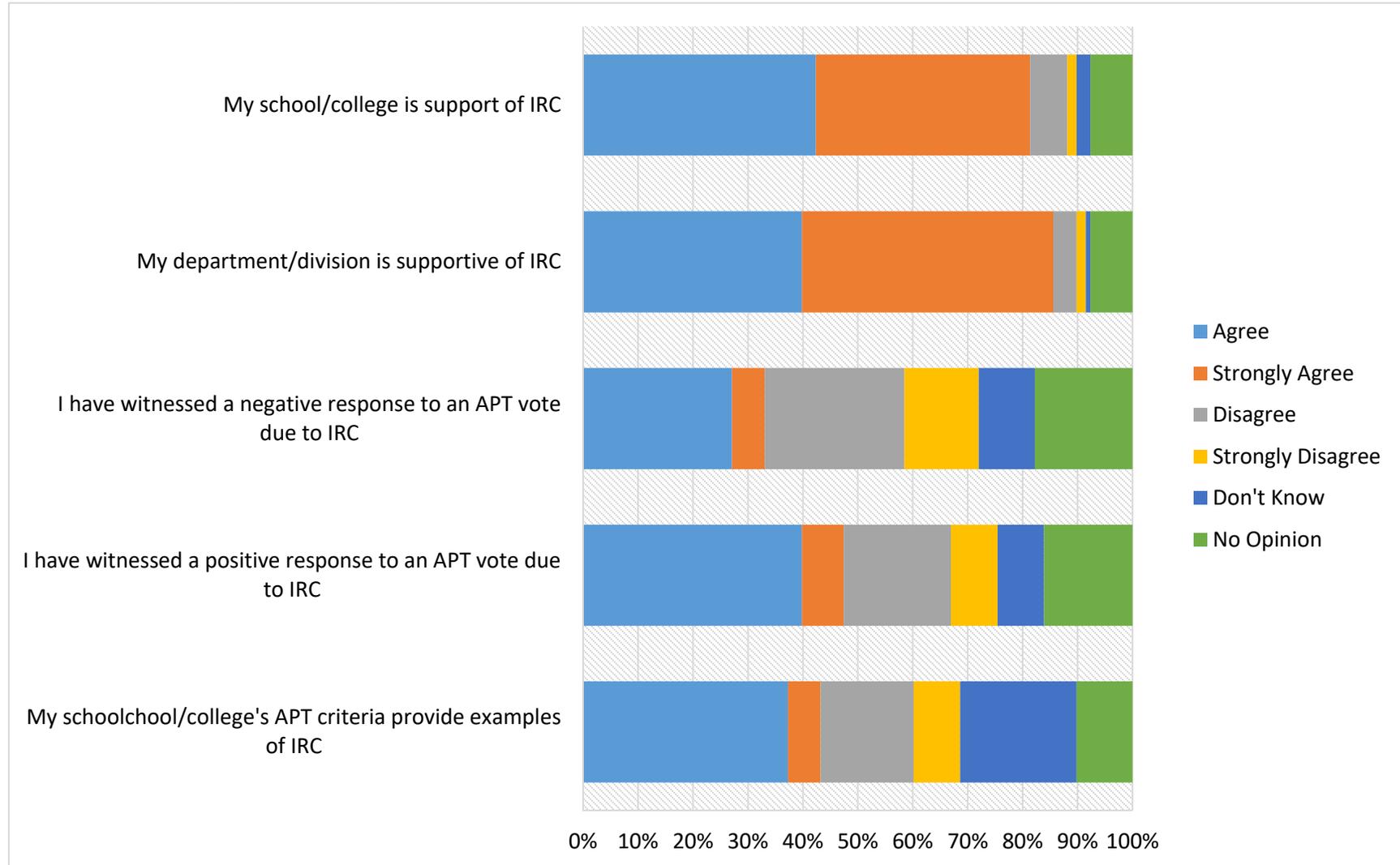
Graph 2: Experience with Interdisciplinary Research Teams



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III. Agreement to Statements

Graph 1: Faculty Perceptions of IRC support in Department or School



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Graph 2: Faculty Perceptions of IRC support

