CSWA Climate Site Visits for Astronomy Departments - Procedure

CSWA Climate Site Visits for Astronomy Departments will be initiated by an invitation from the department chair and will ordinarily last one day. The CSWA chair and the department chair will decide upon a convenient date for the visit. The CSWA chair will select a visiting team of three senior astronomers, usually from among current and former CSWA members.

Prior to the visit, CSWA will administer survey questionnaires to department members and alumni. Surveys will be done using SurveyMonkey. The results of the surveys, as well as any written comments, will then be provided to the site visit team to assist them in preparing for the visit. All survey results will be confidential. CSWA will model their surveys on those of CSWP.

The department will also be asked to provide information, including enrollment statistics by gender, faculty roster, recent hiring activity, recruiting brochures, and family leave policies. The department chair will set up a schedule of meetings for the site visit team.

On the day of the visit, members of the site visit team will meet (not necessarily in this order) with the astronomy department chair, groups of faculty/staff, administrators responsible for faculty appointments or hiring, women postdocs, graduate students, and undergraduates. The goal of these meetings is to provide the site visit team with the quantitative and qualitative information they need to assess the climate for women in the host institution.

The team will write a confidential report for the department chair, detailing the findings of the visit and offering practical suggestions on improving the climate for women. No information specific to the institution, including the survey results, will be made public. The chair will be encouraged to share the report with the rest of the department. Approximately 18 months after the visit, the department chair will be asked to respond in writing to the team, describing actions taken to improve the climate.

Expenses for the visit (i.e., travel, lodging, and per diem for the team) will be the responsibility of the host institution. All members of site visit teams will serve as volunteers. Department chairs will be encouraged to request support for the visit from the administrative officer responsible for the recruitment and retention of under-represented groups.