

## Tenure Outcomes for Assistant Professors by Gender and Race

January 2026

### Background

The ADVANCE Program has conducted analyses to compare tenure rates (i.e., the percentage of faculty promoted within a certain time frame after hiring) by racial and ethnic identity and gender. There have been two previous Cohort Studies published by the ADVANCE Program ([ADVANCE Program, 2009](#), [2018](#)), in which the promotion rates of hiring cohorts, defined as a group of faculty hired within a specific time period, can be compared to each other by racial and ethnic identity, gender, and race/gender intersectional groups. In a 2009 ADVANCE report, two hiring cohorts were examined (AY1993-AY1997 and AY1998-AY2002). The 2009 analysis found women, underrepresented minority (URM)<sup>1</sup> faculty, and those who received tenure clock exemptions (e.g., for childbirth and/or dependent care) were found to be significantly less likely to be awarded tenure. The next iteration of this study ([ADVANCE Program, 2018](#)) also looked at two hiring cohorts (AY1998-AY2002 and AY2003-AY2007). In the 2018 study, differences in tenure rates between men and women improved from the earlier to the later cohort. However, differences in tenure rates between URM faculty and White faculty, and between URM faculty and Asian/Asian American faculty, increased in the later cohort. The purpose of the current study is to continue to examine tenure trends of assistant professors over time, across two five-year cohorts, AY2003-AY2007 and AY2008-AY2012.

### Methods

The ADVANCE Program maintains a large dataset of all tenure-track faculty at U-M from 2001-2024 with key demographic variables.<sup>2</sup> Relevant variables in this dataset included sex<sup>3</sup> (binary) and racial and ethnic identity (as reported to U-M Human Resources), tenure clock start date, and tenure granted year. Tenure clock start date was used to create two cohorts: AY2003-AY2007 and AY2008-AY2012. Consistent with previous ADVANCE reports ([2009](#), [2018](#)), faculty were considered tenured if they were hired as assistant professors and were promoted to associate professors within 10 years of their initial hire. Promotion rates were compared using chi-squared tests.

While previous ADVANCE studies compared the promotion rates of each cohort, the current study examined not only promotion rates, but also the time faculty spent in the assistant professor rank before being granted tenure. Years in the assistant professor rank was calculated by subtracting the year of hire from the tenure granted year. Because the HR data does not indicate whether or not someone had a tenure clock exclusion, calculations of time in rank include time spent in an excluded year (up to 2 years may be excluded from the probationary period in the case of childbearing, dependent care, or medical leave; [University of Michigan, 2024, Section 6C](#)). However, we are not able to tell whether someone received a tenure clock exclusion or took longer than the average faculty member to receive tenure. Faculty who left the

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<sup>1</sup> URM includes individuals who self-identify as African American/Black, Native American/Alaskan Native, Hispanic/Latino/a/e/x, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. URM also includes multiethnic individuals who self-identify with at least one of the URM categories.

<sup>2</sup> Aligning with broader campus reporting practices, ADVANCE extracted, cleaned, and counted faculty data from the U-M Human Resource Snapshot (HR02) data warehouse.

<sup>3</sup> HR02 includes sex (female, male) which we report as gender (women, men).

University as assistant professors were omitted from time in rank analyses. The number of years spent in assistant rank was compared using a type-III, factorial ANOVA.

**Limitations**

We do not have specific tenure review outcome data for the faculty in our sample; we can identify those who received tenure, but among those who left U-M during their probationary period, we cannot identify which faculty left without tenure as a result of an unsuccessful tenure review. Because we are unable to differentiate between those who left before a tenure review and those who left after being denied tenure, all faculty who left the University as an assistant professor were considered “untenured” for the purposes of this study.

Additionally, our dataset does not contain any information about previous work experience before employment at U-M. Because of this, we have no way to distinguish if faculty members worked toward tenure at another institution, or how many years they may have worked toward tenure at another institution. We recognize that in some cases, faculty members could receive tenure faster at U-M because of prior experience at another university and reduce the group average.

**Results**

**Tenure Analysis**

Proportions of faculty are presented in the text below and in the appendix, while counts of faculty are reported in Table 1. The proportion of faculty overall who received tenure in Cohort 2 was significantly higher (73%) than the proportion of faculty in Cohort 1 (59%).

**Table 1. Tenure outcomes: number of faculty by cohort, gender, and racial and ethnic identity**

	Total			White		URM		A/AA	
	All	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
<b>Hiring Cohort One (AY2003-AY2007)</b>	630	242	388	175	257	25	34	42	97
Tenured	372	148	224	108	149	13	17	27	58
Left	258	94	164	67	108	12	17	15	39
<b>Hiring Cohort Two (AY2008-AY2012)</b>	565	219	346	153	217	24	36	42	93
Tenured	410	160	250	117	151	16	24	27	75
Left	155	59	96	36	66	8	12	15	18
<b>All Hiring Cohorts</b>	1195	461	734	328	474	49	70	84	190
Tenured	782	308	474	225	300	29	41	54	133
Left	413	153	260	103	174	20	29	30	57

Within each cohort, the tenure rate of women did not differ significantly from that of men; across cohorts, both women and men received tenure at a higher rate in Cohort 2 (73% and 72%, respectively) than in Cohort 1 (61% and 58%, respectively). See Figure 4 in the Appendix for additional details.

Within each cohort, the tenure rates between White faculty, Asian/Asian American faculty, and URM faculty did not differ significantly from each other. The proportion of URM faculty who received tenure did not significantly differ between Cohort 1 (51%) and Cohort 2 (67%)<sup>4</sup>, while the rates of Asian/Asian American and White faculty increased. The tenure rates of Asian/Asian American faculty significantly increased from Cohort 1 (61%) to Cohort 2 (67%) and the tenure rates of White faculty significantly increased from Cohort 1 (59%) to Cohort 2 (72%). See Figure 5 in the Appendix for additional details.

Within each cohort, tenure rates did not significantly differ between racial and ethnic identity and gender intersectional groups (Figure 1). However, while the tenure rates of White women, White men, and Asian/Asian American men significantly increased between Cohort 1 and Cohort 2, the tenure rates of Asian/Asian American women, URM women, and URM men did not significantly differ between Cohort 1 and Cohort 2.

**Figure 1. Percentage of faculty who received tenure by intersectional group**



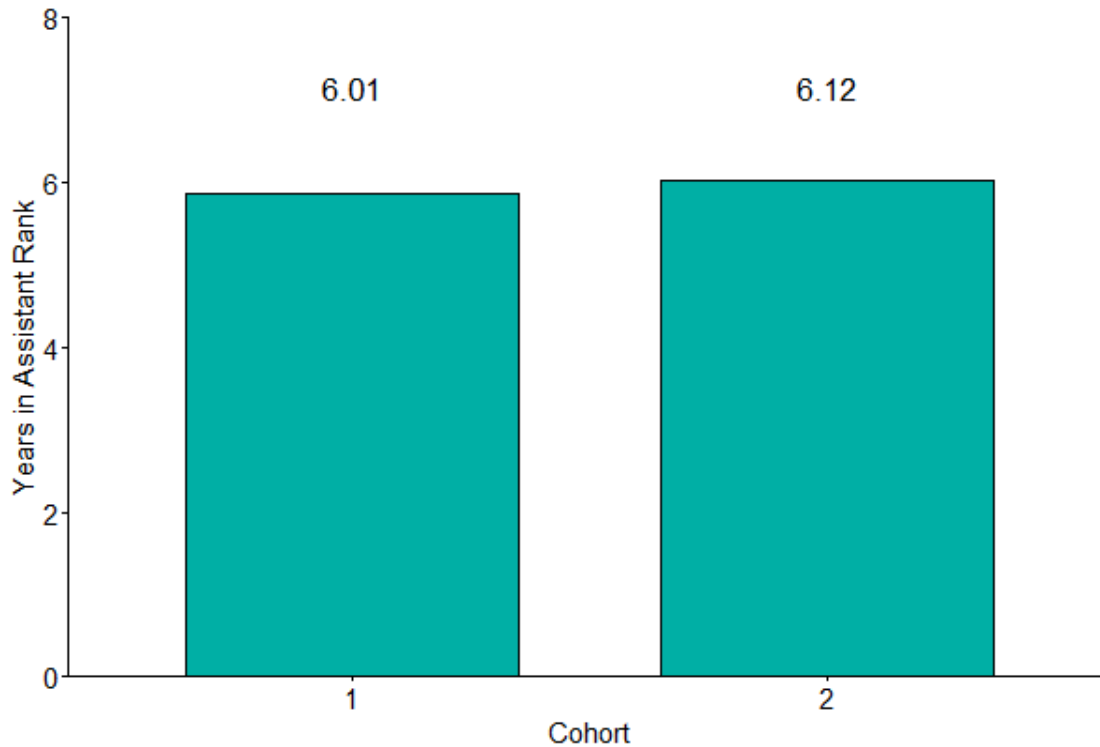
*Note.* For more figures, including a duplication of this figure (Figure 6), and information about statistical testing results, see [the accompanying Appendix](#).

<sup>4</sup> While the proportion of URM faculty who received tenure did increase between cohorts one and two, this change was nonsignificant due to small sample sizes and large variation within groups.

**Time in Assistant Rank**

Across both cohorts, faculty spent 6.06 years in the assistant professor rank on average. A type-III, factorial ANOVA showed no significant differences in time in assistant rank by gender, race, or cohort (Figure 2), or the combination of these factors (Table 2). Because there were no main or interaction effects of these variables on time in the assistant professor rank, no pairwise comparisons were made.

**Figure 2. Average time faculty spent in assistant rank by cohort**



*Note.* For more figures, including a duplication of this figure (Figure 7), and information about statistical testing results, see [the accompanying appendix](#).

**Table 2. Type III Factorial ANOVA: time in assistant professor rank by gender, race, and cohort**

Measure	Sum Sq	Df	F	p	$\eta^2$
Gender	0.18	1	0.09	.759	< .001
Race	4.51	2	1.16	.314	.003
Cohort	0.03	1	0.01	.902	< .001
Gender x Race	1.60	2	0.41	.663	.001
Gender x Cohort	0.68	1	0.35	.555	< .001
Race x Cohort	2.14	2	0.55	.577	.001
Gender x Race x Cohort	1.73	2	0.45	.640	.001



## Discussion

An earlier ADVANCE Program report ([2018](#)) found that differences between the tenure rates of women and men dramatically improved across earlier five-year cohorts (AY1993-AY2002) and were eliminated in more recent cohorts (AY2003-AY2007). This is consistent across both five-year cohorts in the present report (AY2003-AY2007 and AY2008-AY2012), where no discrepancies were found between women and men in either cohort. Additionally, in previous findings, the proportion of URM faculty who received tenure was lower than that of both White and Asian/Asian American faculty ([ADVANCE Program, 2018](#)). In contrast, we did not find differences in tenure rates by racial/ethnic groups in either cohort in the current report. This suggests that improvements made by the university in the early 2000s to improve gender and racial equity among tenure track faculty not only improved outcomes of faculty at that time, but led to sustained change.

In the previous report, we found that Asian/Asian American women and URM faculty had worse outcomes than Asian/Asian American men and White faculty in their AY2003-AY2007 cohort ([ADVANCE Program, 2018](#)). We did find that significantly more White and Asian/Asian American men faculty received tenure in Cohort 2 than in Cohort 1, but Asian/Asian American women and URM faculty tenure rates did not significantly increase. This suggests that any initiatives taken by the university in recent years to improve probationary period outcomes of tenure-track faculty may not be benefiting all faculty equally. Activities that support pre-tenure faculty should be reviewed to see whether programs may be inadvertently advancing only some faculty groups. Additionally, while the present study did not compare differences between schools and colleges, we recognize that the faculty compositions vary widely between schools and colleges ([ADVANCE Program, 2024a](#)). School and college differences may also be influencing these results, where units with more White faculty or Asian/Asian American men are providing effective support to pretenure faculty.

No previous ADVANCE reports have examined time in assistant professor rank as there is less variance in time in rank for assistants due to the tenure clock, as opposed to the associate and full professors ranks, which are not time-bound in the same way. The current report found that both within and across cohorts, there were no significant differences in how long faculty spent in the assistant rank by gender, race, or between cohorts. Interestingly, while faculty can receive exclusions to their tenure clocks in the case of childbearing, dependent care, or medical leave, one might expect higher averages, or more variance, for groups that historically carry higher burdens of caregiving, such as women ([GEPI, 2024](#)) and those who hold marginalized racial identities ([American Psychological Association, 2011](#)). However, our ANOVA results suggest that the time spent in the assistant rank did not differ significantly between gender and racial groups. This indicates that either faculty of all gender and racial identities received tenure clock exclusions at similar rates, or that receiving tenure clock exclusions did not change the amount of time spent in the associate professor rank.

### **Selected Recommendations and Resources**

While tenure-granting processes vary between both schools/colleges and departments at U-M, there are some strategies that the University has adopted to help create more equitable practices. Selected resources and recommendations include:

- **Revisit faculty activities that are credited during tenure and promotion reviews.** There are many essential activities that maintain the University's excellence which require faculty effort. These activities are often outside of their official responsibilities (e.g., informal mentoring and providing emotional support to students, staff, and peers), but are often not considered in tenure deliberations.
- **Promote best practices for equitable tenure review.** The Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT) Players at U-M provide innovative, interactive, theatrical case study sessions for faculty, graduate students, and university leaders. Among other topics, CRLT players offer a session on [promoting equity and excellence in tenure and promotion processes and decisions](#).
- **Ensure tenure and promotion criteria are consistent across levels of review.** The conversations about the requirements for tenure and the multiple pathways to promotion that are discussed at the University level should be mirrored within schools and colleges, and within their departments and programs. This would enable clear communication about the institution's priorities among leadership and create an opportunity to hold leadership accountable at all levels.

For more information on these recommendations and others, please see the ADVANCE Program's [2024\(b\)](#) report, [Assessing the Academic Work Environment for Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty at The University Of Michigan in 2023: University-Related Climate Across Gender, Race, and Rank](#).

## Acknowledgments

*This report was prepared by the following individuals:*

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Brittany Dernberger, ADVANCE Director of Research and Evaluation;

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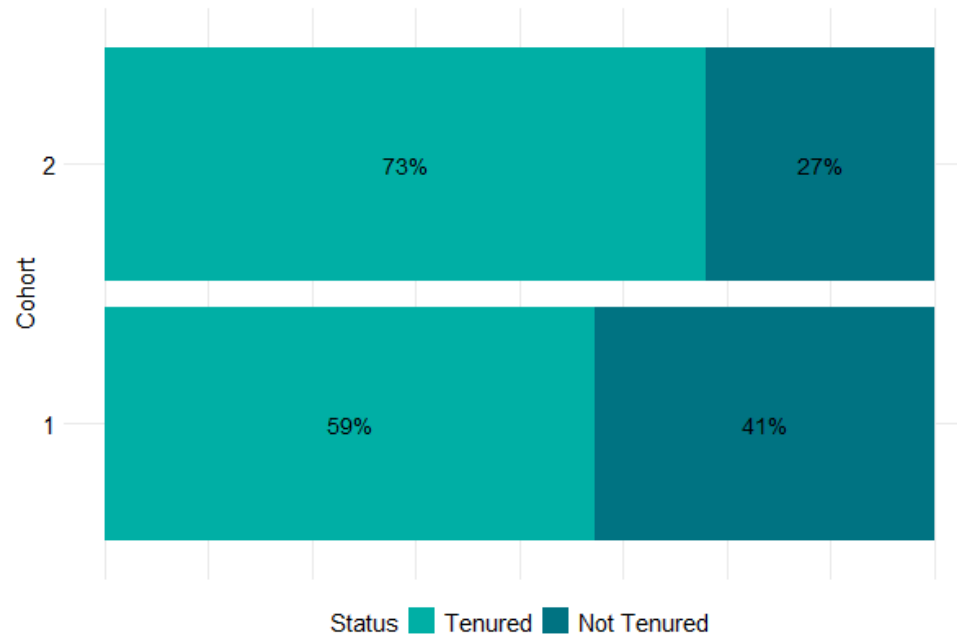
## Appendix

The main body of the report highlights a selection of relevant outcomes. Below is a comprehensive list of findings for all analyses performed, including those not featured in the main report. This appendix uses figures extensively; for a screen-reader accessible version, please refer to the accompanying [supplemental tabular data](#).

### *Percentage of Assistant Professors Who Received Tenure*

**Figure 3.**

*Percentage of faculty who received tenure*



- A significantly higher proportion of faculty in Cohort 2 received tenure than those of Cohort 1,  $\chi^2(1, N = 1038) = 22.58, p < .001$ .

**Figure 4.**

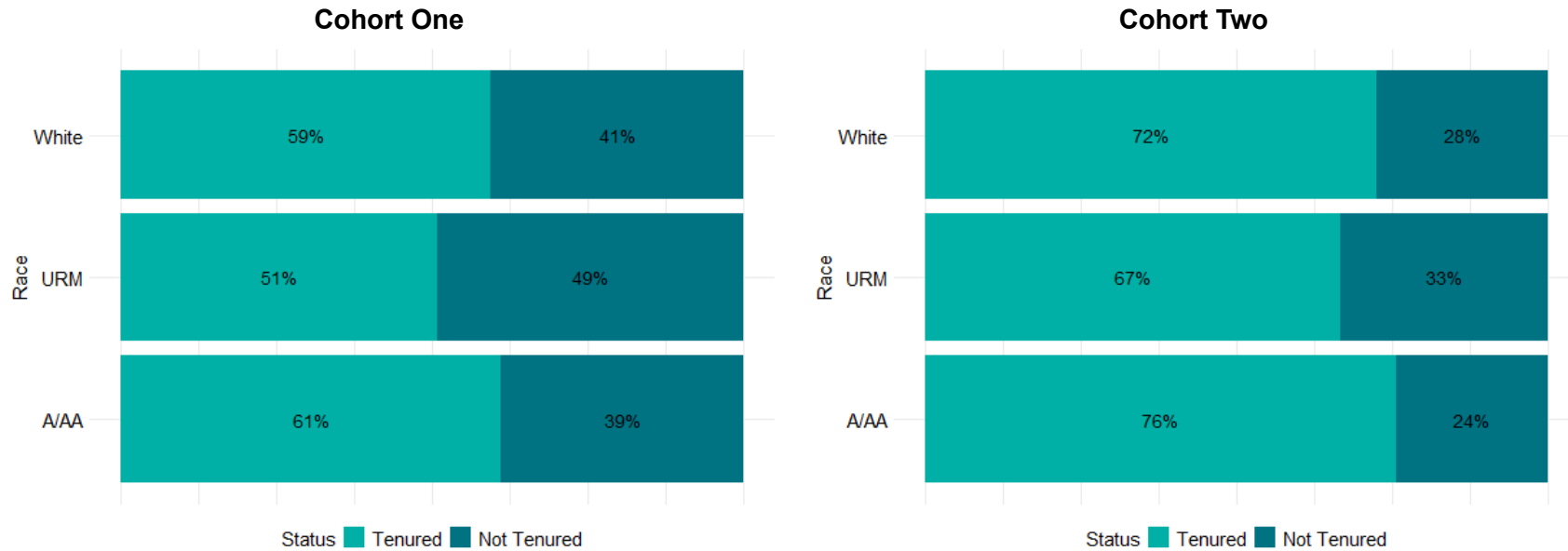
*Percentage of faculty who received tenure by gender*



- In Cohort one, there was no significant difference between the tenure rates of men and women,  $\chi^2(1, N = 473) = 0.00, p = 1.00$ .
- In Cohort two, there was no significant difference between the tenure rates of men and women,  $\chi^2(1, N = 565) = 0.01, p = .91$ .
- A significantly higher proportion of women in Cohort two received tenure than those of Cohort one,  $\chi^2(1, N = 395) = 8.62, p = .003$ .
- A significantly higher proportion of men in Cohort two received tenure than those of Cohort one,  $\chi^2(1, N = 643) = 13.31, p < .001$ .

**Figure 5.**

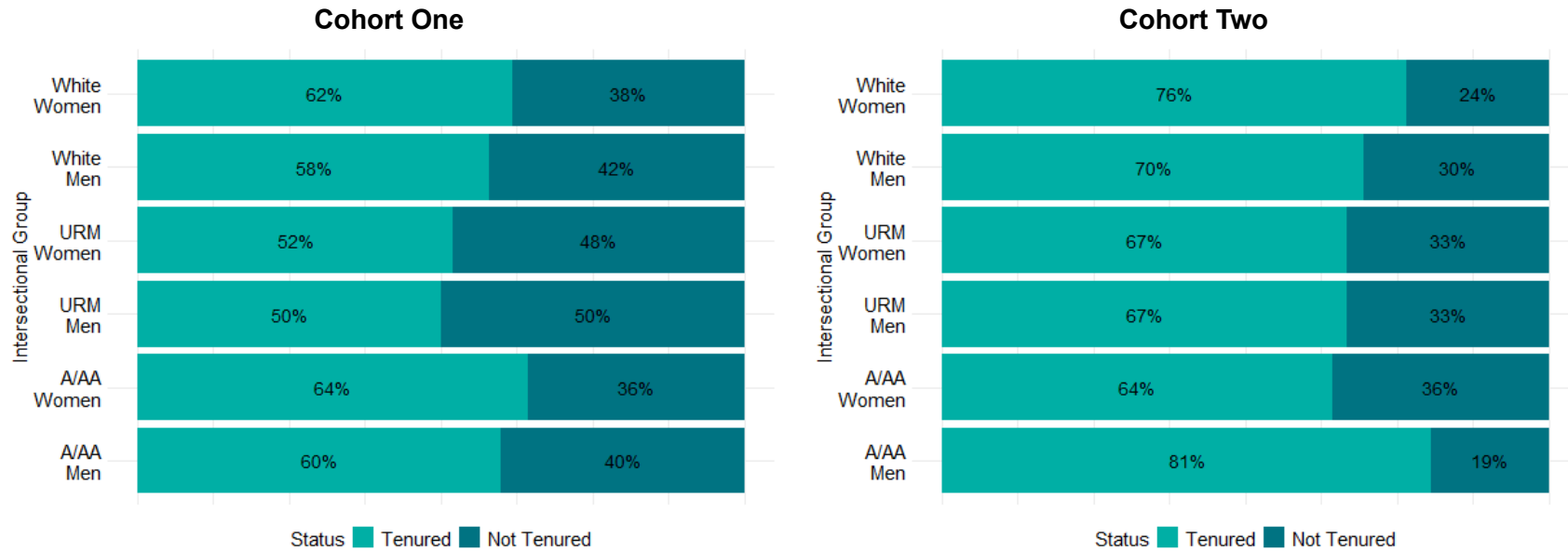
*Percentage of faculty who received tenure by racial and ethnic identity*



- In Cohort one, there was no significant difference between the tenure rates of different racial groups,  $\chi^2(2, N = 473) = 1.20, p = .547$ .
- In Cohort two, there was no significant difference between the tenure rates of different racial groups,  $\chi^2(2, N = 565) = 1.66, p = .436$ .
- A significantly higher proportion of White faculty in Cohort two received tenure than those of Cohort one,  $\chi^2(1, N = 700) = 14.48, p < .001$ .
- There were no significant differences between URM faculty in Cohort one and Cohort two,  $\chi^2(1, N = 103) = 1.91, p = .167$ .
- A significantly higher proportion of Asian/Asian American (A/AA) faculty in Cohort two received tenure than those of Cohort one,  $\chi^2(1, N = 235) = 5.06, p = .024$ .

**Figure 6.**

*Percentage of faculty who received tenure by intersectional group*



- In Cohort one, there was no significant difference between the tenure rates of different intersectional groups,  $\chi^2(5, N = 473) = 1.98, p = .851$ .
- In Cohort two, there was no significant difference between the tenure rates of different intersectional groups,  $\chi^2(5, N = 565) = 7.68, p = .174$ .
- A significantly higher proportion of White women,  $\chi^2(1, N = 283) = 8.15, p = .004$ , White men,  $\chi^2(1, N = 417) = 6.07, p = .014$ , and Asian/Asian American (A/AA) men,  $\chi^2(1, N = 165) = 6.76, p = .009$ , in Cohort two received tenure than those of Cohort one.
- The same proportion of Asian/Asian American women,  $\chi^2(1, N = 70) = 0.002, p = .960$ , URM women,  $\chi^2(1, N = 42) = 1.27, p = .26$ , and URM men,  $\chi^2(1, N = 61) = 0.33, p = .564$ , in Cohort two received tenure as those of Cohort one.<sup>4</sup>

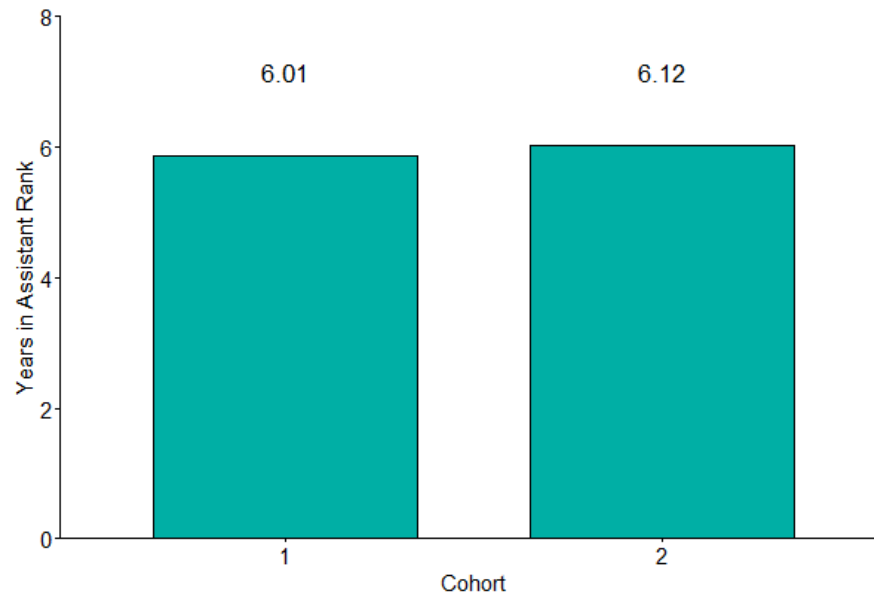
<sup>4</sup> While the proportion of URM faculty who received tenure did increase between cohorts one and two, this change was nonsignificant due to small sample sizes and large variation within groups.

### **Average Time Faculty Spent in Assistant Professor Rank**

Because there were no main or interaction effects of these variables on time in the assistant professor rank (Table 1), no pairwise comparisons were made (i.e., because there was no gender x cohort interaction effects, we did not compare women or men across cohorts; this was true for all interaction effects—gender x race, race x cohort, and gender x race x cohort). Descriptive figures with average time in rank by race, gender, and intersectional groups can be found below.

**Figure 7.**

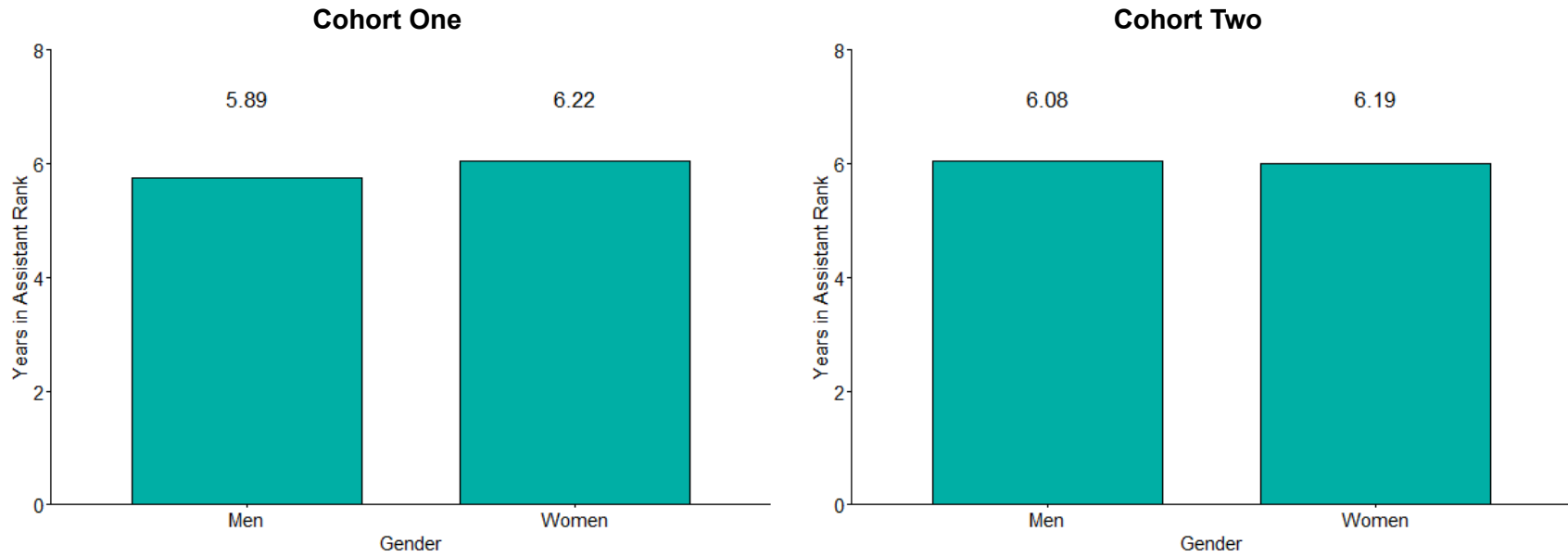
*Average time faculty spent in assistant rank by cohort*



- Across both cohorts, faculty spent 6.06 years on average in the assistant professor rank. There was no significant difference in how long it took faculty to achieve tenure between both cohorts.

**Figure 8.**

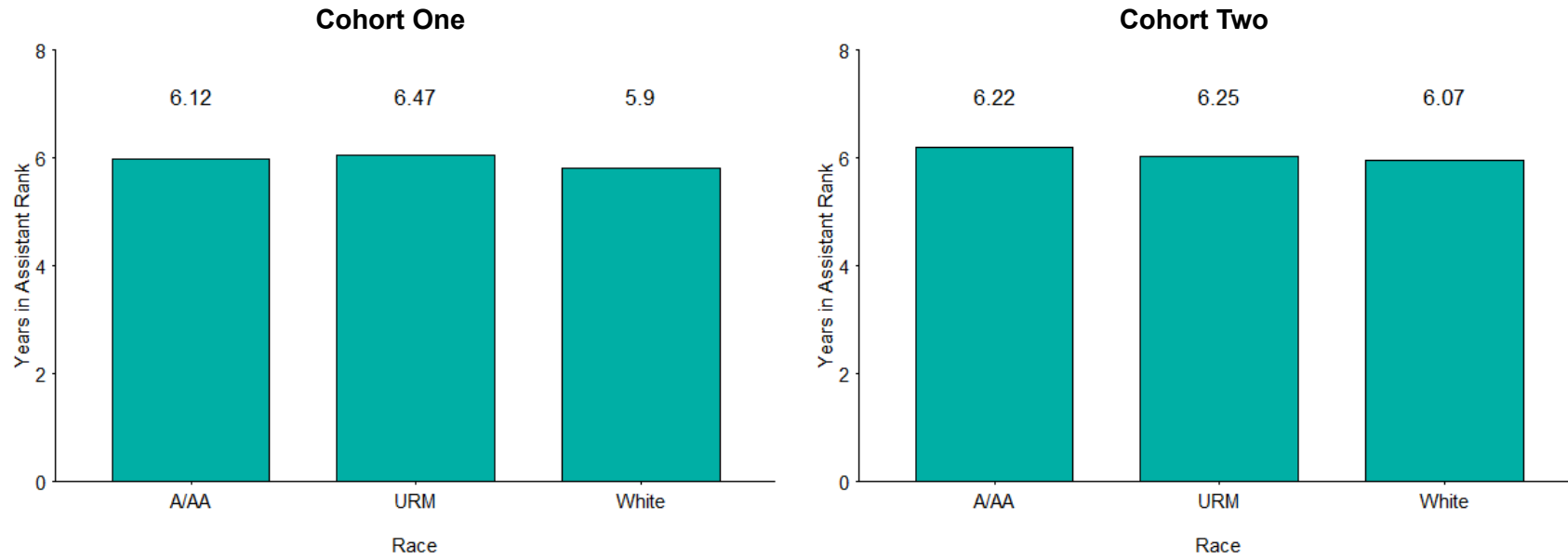
*Average time faculty spent in assistant rank by gender*



- There were no significant differences in how long faculty spent in the assistant rank by gender, both within and across cohorts.

**Figure 9.**

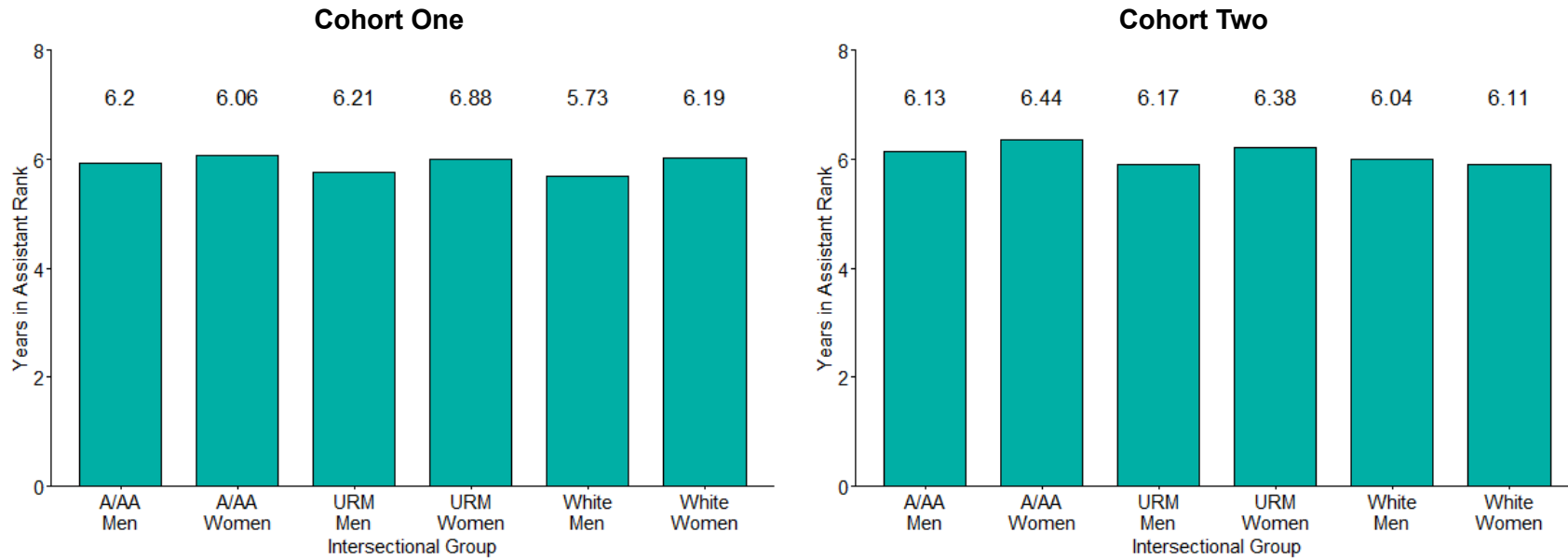
*Average time faculty spent in assistant rank by racial and ethnic identity*



- There were no significant differences in how long faculty spent in the assistant rank by race, both within and across cohorts.

**Figure 8.**

*Average time faculty spent in assistant rank by intersectional group*



- There were no significant differences in how long faculty spent in the assistant rank by intersectional (race x gender) groups, both within and across cohorts.