



The Equity Advisor Program at Iowa State University



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ISU ADVANCE: Background

The original goal of the ISU ADVANCE program was to investigate the effectiveness of a multilevel participatory action model to produce institutional transformation resulting in the full participation of women and minority faculty in the university.

This model focused on transforming departmental cultures (views, attitudes, norms and shared beliefs), practices (what people say and do), and structures (physical and social arrangements) as well as university policies through active participation of individuals at all levels of the university.

ADVANCE at Iowa State started as an NSF project and initially focused on faculty in nine focal departments, chosen from the College of Engineering, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

Each college chose a senior faculty member from within their respective colleges to be Equity Advisors. These individuals were heavily involved with the ISU ADVANCE PIs in their process of developing and implementing best practices for fostering cultures, practices and structures of inclusion are goals in departments within their respective colleges.

The Equity Advisors were quickly recognized as being key change agents within their colleges. Now that the ISU ADVANCE program has been institutionalized, Iowa State has chosen to require all of its colleges to appoint a tenured faculty member as an Equity Advisor in their college. These Equity Advisors are a key part of furthering the university-wide focus on identification of subtle and overt impediments to equity and on policies which will dissolve these barriers.

Faculty Fellow

As part of the efforts of Iowa State University to institutionalize the ISU ADVANCE program, the Provost's Office established a Faculty Fellow position to oversee the ADVANCE program. This is a 25% administrative position. One of the key roles of the ADVANCE Faculty Fellow is to oversee and coordinate the activities of the Equity Advisors and to serve as a liaison between the Equity Advisors and the Provost's Office.

ISU ADVANCE Team

This structure allows the Provost, Associate Provost, ADVANCE Faculty Fellow, Deans, College Equity Advisors, College Diversity Committees and Department Chairs to continue to develop and transform policies to:

- Increase the transparency of decision making
- Institutionalize flexible career options
- Strengthen and expand mentoring efforts
- Increase awareness of administration, faculty and staff regarding issues for women and minority faculty

Equity Advisor Program

In each college at Iowa State University, the Equity Advisor plays a central role in implementing ISU ADVANCE goals. Within their colleges, the Equity Advisor is the primary leader of efforts to transform the culture within the college to improve their success in recruiting and retaining high quality faculty and specifically women and underrepresented minority faculty. The Equity Advisor in each college reports to their Dean's office. In addition, they work with other Equity Advisors across campus and with the ADVANCE Faculty Fellow from the Provost's office to formulate and implement strategies and activities (e.g. workshops, networking events) at the university and college level to support institutional transformation and to plan for sustainability of the program.

All Equity Advisors work within their colleges to:

- ❖ disseminate information and best practices via ADVANCE-specific and established college activities (i.e. P and T workshops, Diversity Committees)
- ❖ communicate college needs to the ADVANCE program
- ❖ provide support for institutional change to all college departments
- ❖ provide information and consultation on issues including:
 - ✓ recruiting and hiring best practices
 - ✓ mentoring
 - ✓ professional development
 - ✓ promotion
 - ✓ leadership opportunities
 - ✓ departmental climate regarding support for women/underrepresented faculty.

Equity Advisors at Iowa State University

College	Equity Advisor
Agriculture and Life Sciences	Susan Lamont Distinguished Professor, Animal Science
Business	Dan Zhou Professor, Information Systems
Design	Mark Chidister Associate Professor, Integrated Studio Arts, Associate Dean of Academic Programs
Engineering	Sriram Sundararajan Associate Professor, Mechanical Engineering
Human Sciences	Mary Lynn Damhorst Professor, Apparel, Events, and Hospitality Management
Liberal Arts and Sciences	Lisa Larson Professor, Psychology
Library	Hilary Seo Associate Professor, Head of Preservation
Veterinary Medicine	Catherine Logue Professor, Veterinary Microbiology & Preventative Medicine

Case Study – Networking Luncheons

One example of a successful, on-going, college-specific initiative is the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CAL S) Women's Networking Luncheons.

- ❖ Women are under-represented in most departments in the college, leading to limited opportunities for interaction and community building.
- ❖ To address this challenge, networking luncheons are organized and facilitated each semester by the college Equity Advisor.

To help build and maintain the pipeline, luncheons are held with three different groups:

- ❖ Graduate student and postdoctoral women
- ❖ Non-tenure-eligible women faculty
- ❖ Tenure-eligible and tenured faculty



Events consist of:

- ❖ Buffet meal – to provide nourishment, enjoyment and interaction
- ❖ Self-introductions, including "fun facts" – to get to know each other better
- ❖ Deep discussion guided by the college Equity Advisor on diverse topics in professional development and work/life satisfaction – to provide resources for success and satisfaction

Example discussion themes:

- ✓ Do you get all the recognition that you deserve?
- ✓ Essentialism: the disciplined pursuit of less.
- ✓ Are you as productive as you want to be?
- ✓ Making the most out of mentoring.
- ✓ Stressed out?? Who, me?!
- ✓ Journeys: with help along the way.



Comments from participants:

- The last program made me realize that I could, and should, ask my supervisor to nominate me for awards for my work. I did, and got a college award this year!
- I met some other faculty who had great experience in areas that I am new at, and they offered to be resources for me. They are all very approachable.
- I liked hearing about some specific strategies to say "no", nicely but firmly. I am going to use some of them, so I can get more time to focus on the big stuff.
- Great to meet informally with brand-new to senior women faculty in other departments in the college. Now I don't feel as isolated.

This program builds and maintains a strong, interconnected, knowledgeable, and supportive community of women in the college. With participation capped at 25 participants for each luncheon to encourage excellent interaction, up to 150 college STEM women at all career stages are actively engaged in this program each year.

Summary

- ❑ The Equity Advisor program is successful because EAs are experienced faculty who are embedded in the culture of their colleges and they meet regularly to share resources, issues and coordinate university-wide programs.
- ❑ Success is recognized by other institutions reaching to Iowa State University for assistance in developing similar programs nationally.

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- For a more detailed description of the ISU ADVANCE program visit our website: <http://www.provost.iastate.edu/isu-advance>

