

ASSESSING AND IMPROVING THE CLIMATE FOR WOMEN SCIENTISTS AT THE DEPARTMENTAL AND INSTITUTIONAL LEVELS THROUGH THE IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY ADVANCE PROGRAM

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About Iowa State ADVANCE

ISU ADVANCE has become Iowa State's most prominent vehicle to recruit, retain, and advance women and women of color in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) faculty positions.

Our program identifies cultures, practices, and structures that enhance or hinder the careers of ISU faculty, and works with faculty and administrators to transform university policies, practices, and academic culture in pursuit of a diverse and vibrant faculty in STEM disciplines.

In all of our relationships, our strategy is to collaborate with and develop agents of change.

We use a "top down and bottom up" approach to achieve Institutional Transformation



The Bottom-up Approach

Using a "bottom up" approach within departments, we work with all faculty to enhance the work environment using a Collaborative Transformation approach.

The Collaborative Transformation Process:

1. Focus groups meet with facilitator to discuss department culture, practice and structure.
2. Department report is prepared to mirror back to department ways workplace climate influences effectiveness of the department faculty.
3. Needs assessment meetings conducted by ADVANCE Professors are tailored to meet the needs of individual departments.
4. Collaborative problem solving sessions include department faculty and ADVANCE program leaders.

Work within our first three focal departments has revealed six common issues that affected faculty members' ability to conduct their best work.

- Spatial proximity and facility issues
- Gaps between stated ideals and reality
- Mentoring of Assistant and Associate Professors
- Democratic participation
- Recruitment and retention
- Family friendly policies

Each focal department developed an action plan to address issues and the departments are currently implementing those plans.



Focus group meetings were organized by rank so that Assistant Professors (shown here) could have candid conversations with the facilitator.

Approaches to Institutional Transformation

The Top-down Approach



ISU ADVANCE Program Reader Theatre

Working from the "top down," we create the capacity for change at the college and university levels through our Equity Advisor positions and our ADVANCE Leadership Council. Examples of top-down activities are:

- ISU ADVANCE sponsored workshops for chairs and deans on Cognitive Errors and P&T review
- Conducted two Faculty Satisfaction Surveys—COACHE (tenure-eligible faculty-2005) and AAUDE (all faculty-2008)
- Results of Satisfaction Surveys were reported to the Faculty Senate and President's Council by the Provost
- Colleges implemented promotion and tenure workshops for Assistant and Associate Professors, based on results of surveys and ADVANCE findings
- Sponsored a National Conference on "The New Norm of Faculty Flexibility" (October 2008)
- Worked with Faculty Senate to adopt policy on "Modified Duties" for the arrival of a child
- Sponsored the ADVANCE Scholar Program for STEM women faculty of color



Discussions and Results Extend Campus-wide

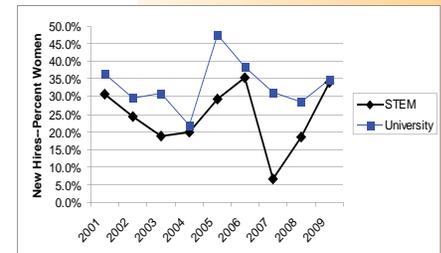
One mechanism of institutionalizing positive change is to provide workshops and training opportunities for department chairs and faculty members across campus.

We sponsored two effective workshops that incorporated **Readers Theatre**, using actors from STEM departments.

- A university-wide workshop "Practical Tools for Recognizing and Reducing Unintentional Bias" included a Readers Theatre production of "The Faculty Meeting"
- A workshop for chairs on "Promotion and Tenure at ISU: Strategies for Ensuring Equity" included a Readers Theatre production of "Tenure Assistance"

Resources and "best practices" for faculty searches were developed in response to a need identified by ADVANCE Professors and Equity Advisors.

- Resource pages include guidelines for the search process, sample forms, and ideas for discussions to have with departmental faculty. Resources are available on our Web site and on a CD that was distributed to >200 faculty who attended events
- Workshops on faculty searches in Fall 2008 attracted many faculty who had not previously attended ISU ADVANCE events. Of 128 attendees, 62 (48%) were attending their first ISU ADVANCE workshop.
- Since ISU ADVANCE began in 2006, the proportion of women hired in STEM departments has increased.



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