



Iowa State University ADVANCE Collaborative Transformation Project

First Round Focal Department Transformational Strategies and Outcomes (January 2008 - January 2009)

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I. Background

“The Iowa State University ADVANCE program is [...] designed to create an infrastructure at ISU for transforming structures, cultures, and practices in ways that enable and support recruitment and retention of a diverse, highly qualified and cohesive faculty. This infrastructure is designed to include “top down” university policies and procedures as well as “bottom up” initiatives involving departmental work climate and strategies for improving recruitment, retention and promotion of faculty” (Bird and Hamrick 2008).

To this end, ISU ADVANCE:

- collects base-line quantitative data on faculty recruitment, retention and promotion, and on faculty work issues such as satisfaction with departmental work climate and resource distributions,
- supports policies designed to enhance faculty productivity and job satisfaction,
- implements new programs such as faculty networking events and a mentoring program for faculty of color,
- supports three Equity Advisors in the three focal colleges,
- provides training to STEM faculty and department Chairs about subtle biases and how they operate,
- supports ADVANCE Professors in each of 9 focal departments who work with the ADVANCE Leadership Team, focal department Chairs, and fellow faculty members to develop and implement department-level transformation strategies as part of a process called “Collaborative Transformation.”

The ISU ADVANCE **Collaborative Transformation** (CT) project is a three-step action research process that involves researchers trained in social science

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research methodologies working with faculty from nine ISU STEM departments (phased into the program over 5 years).

- The CT Project is designed to first “mirror back” to faculty in each participating department aspects of their own departmental structures, cultures and practices, particularly those involving faculty recruitment, retention and promotion that affect the relative representation of women and men faculty, and relative representation of other groups. Focal department faculty participate in focus groups and interviews in order to provide the information necessary for the CT project.
- The CT project is designed to enable faculty in each focal department to utilize the information gleaned during the data collection process to formulate *action plans* for departmental changes (in those areas identified by departmental faculty themselves).
- The CT project is designed to enable faculty in each department to implement *transformation strategies*³ for enhancing departmental structures, cultures and practices in ways that meet departmental goals for enhancing faculty productivity and satisfaction.

Findings from each separate focal department are then used to create synthesis reports (in years 2, 4 and 5 of the grant project) that integrate results from multiple departments in order to identify patterns in departmental structures, cultures and practices that (a) most enhance faculty members’ scholarly productivity and job satisfaction, and (b) most enhance the successful recruitment, retention and promotion of women faculty (as well as men faculty). The first synthesis report (based on Round 1 Focal Departments) is now available (Bird and Hamrick 2008) at <http://www.advance.iastate.edu/>.

An underlying assumption of the CT approach is that enhancing the recruitment, retention and promotion of women faculty requires universities to transform workplace structures, cultures and practices to meet the career and quality of life needs of women faculty. Many of these needs, such as parental leave and dual-career hiring, affect both women and men. But because these are issues that continue to affect women at a higher rate, women faculty are disproportionately negatively affected in universities that have not adequately altered their structures, cultures and practices.

³ Transformation strategies are strategies specific to each department. ADVANCE Team members are available to assist Department Chairs, ADVANCE Professors, and the departmental ADVANCE team in developing the appropriate strategies, implementing these strategies, documenting conditions within the department as they relate to the issue being addressed with each strategy. As the department moves forward with each transformation strategy, ADVANCE team members will also gather information regarding progress toward change. In addition to interview and focus group data, responses to university wide surveys (e.g., COACHE survey) will be used to assess aggregated attitudinal and behavioral changes of the faculty within focal departments.

Findings from the CT project will be used in the latter stages of the 5 year project to develop a comprehensive guide to best approaches for diagnosing and addressing barriers to faculty productivity and satisfaction. This guide will be available as a resource for university administrators at all levels of the university.

II. Round 1 Focal Department Transformational Strategies and Outcomes

Round 1 ISU ADVANCE Focal Departments are Ecology, Evolution, and Organismal Biology (EEOB), Genetics, Development and Cell Biology (GDCB), and Materials Science and Engineering (MSE).

A. *Outcomes associated with Training of Departmental ADVANCE Professors and Chairs for ISU ADVANCE CT Project*

1. Following our first training on subtle bias in the workplace, which preceded the data collection for the CT project in the first 3 focal departments, focal department Chairs took Assistant professors in their own departments out for breakfast or lunch to discuss any questions the Assistant professors might have had about departmental operating procedures, tenure and review, mentoring, etc. Assistant professors in each focal department later reported (in focus groups and interviews) a highly favorable response to the Chairs' proactive steps towards ensuring transparency and clear communication among Assistant professors. Department Chairs have institutionalized this practice.
2. Focal department Chairs report that their departments' participation in the ADVANCE CT project and ADVANCE networking events, along with the formal designation of ADVANCE Professors, has enhanced opportunities for faculty discussions about topics not ordinarily broached in faculty meetings or casual faculty discussions.

B. *Outcomes associated with Collaborative Transformation Project in the Departments and Leadership of ADVANCE Professors*

Departmental efforts made thus far under the leadership of ADVANCE Professors to improve department climate and to create structures more conducive to recruitment, retention and promotion of faculty—especially women faculty—include:

1. Addressing Work-Life Issues:
 - One department (GDCB) drafted a set of mechanisms for providing “Relief from Teaching for New Parents” and is working to meet this departmental objective within the context of

University guidelines (Powell-Coffman 2008a). Another department has also discussed this issue (EEOB). Another department (MSE) has agreed that they should consider related options with an awareness of the arrangements that are most likely to be acceptable to departmental faculty (Constant 2008a; Janzen 2008c).

- One department sponsored a meeting between the department Chair, the AP and Associate Provost Susan Carlson to discuss the limitations of current University policies on parental leave and guidelines for modifying departmental governance documents to address work/life issues (Powell-Coffman 2008b).
- Discussions in the departments about work-life issues for parents have led also to conversations about how illness and other life events might affect faculty position responsibilities (Janzen 2008a; Powell-Coffman 2008c).
- Two departments (EEOB, MSE) raised the issue of appropriate faculty meeting times.
- One department invited Associate Provost Susan Carlson to meet with them to discuss ISU's existing work-life balance policies (Constant 2007).
- Faculty in two departments (GDCB, EEOB) collaborated to produce a mechanism for providing childcare for visiting speakers. Similar efforts were made for workshops hosted by these departments (Powell-Coffman 2008a).
- Three department APs have provided input and have expressed considerable support for a proposed University-level policy for modifying faculty duties to accommodate the needs of parents of "newly arrived children." APs have also discussed the proposed policy at their own departmental faculty meetings and in meetings with colleagues outside their home departments.

2. Addressing Recruitment Issues:

- All three departments held discussions during job searches (most at the department level, some at the college level) about the importance of understanding and avoiding cognitive (gender and race-related) errors and subtle gender biases. Not all faculty who were a part of these discussions necessarily agreed with or "got" the issues regarding unintentional bias, but ADVANCE Professors explain that the CT project has at least provided a space for these discussions (Constant 2008b; Janzen 2008b; Powell-Coffman 2008a).
- Similarly, faculty in all three focal departments have addressed the issue of whether and to what extent "diversity" should be consciously used (or not) in faculty searches. Lack of consensus exists in the departments regarding how and when

“diversity” should enter discussions (e.g., is “diversity” a reasonable “tie-breaker” issue?) (Constant 2008b; Janzen 2008b; Powell-Coffman 2008a).

- Two departments (GDCB, EEOB), in collaboration with a non-Focal Department (BBMB), wrote a proposal for and received a women’s enrichment mini-grant to support a seminar series “for promising post-doctoral fellows and future faculty in the basic life sciences.” The intent is to invite promising women scholars and scholars of color. Three promising women scholars are scheduled to visit the campus in the inaugural year of this seminar series (Powell-Coffman 2008a).
- One department (GDCB) has engaged in discussion among the faculty regarding the implications of including particular phrasing in faculty position recruitment advertisements that may unintentionally reduce the number of women applicants for open faculty positions.
- Similarly, another department (EEOB) has charged departmental search committees for hiring new faculty to strive “to solicit and receive applications from a broad and diverse applicant pool.” Departmental search committees are also now formally charged with (a) judging applicants’ vitas “based on explicit criteria,” (b) using “a matrix to ensure objectivity” in this process, and (c) notifying voting faculty within the department at least three days in advance of the faculty meeting for discussing an initial short list of possible interviewees of the “proposed candidates.” “The voting faculty may” then “choose to interview candidates other than, or in addition to, those recommended by the search committee.” These procedures are now part of the department’s governance document (Janzen 2008c).
- One department (MSE) has increased participation among departmental faculty in educational efforts regarding best practices for recruiting women faculty and faculty of color by sponsoring a faculty member (Full professor who is not the department’s ADVANCE Professor) to attend a national workshop and to then present back to the faculty on lessons learned from the workshop.

3. Addressing Tenure and Promotion Issues:

- One department (GDCB) developed a seminar series specifically for departmental Assistant professors to present their own “research in progress” and encouraged Assistant professors to invite prominent scholars in their area of research to come to ISU to give presentations (with funding support) (Powell-Coffman 2008a).

- One department (MSE) is in the process of developing a departmental mentoring guide (Constant 2008a).
- One department (EEOB) instituted a formal policy whereby Associate professors may request to meet with a special review committee comprised of Full professors who will provide feedback to the Associate professor regarding issues of promotion to Full professor. This policy was written into the departmental governance document (Janzen 2008c).
- Two departments (EEOB, MSE) are discussing the possibility of implementing “team mentoring” (i.e., teams of tenured faculty who mentor tenure-track Assistant professors) (Constant 2008a; Janzen 2008c).

4. Addressing Department Climate Issues:

- All departments (many but not all faculty members, Chairs) participated in a “Practical Tools for Recognizing and Reducing Unintentional Bias” Workshop organized by ADVANCE Equity Advisor, Janette Thomson; APs and EAs also participated as “players” in a reader’s theater enactment of subtle bias (October 31, 2007).
- Two departments have acknowledged the need to ensure that Assistant professors feel welcomed to participate in and state frankly/honestly their own views in discussions about important department issues (Janzen 2008b; Powell-Coffman 2008a). One of these departments (GDCB) acknowledged the importance of senior faculty asking junior faculty for their input (as a way to ensure full and open participation of the faculty). A third department did not report problems in this area (Bird and Hamrick 2007).
- In one department (GDCB), an Assistant Professor, post-docs and graduate students organized a special seminar on “communication with journal editors.” The seminar helped to address the perception among many faculty and students that this information was most readily available through informal networks (Powell-Coffman 2008a).
- One department (GDCB), though initially skeptical that ADVANCE CT would lead to excessive faculty meetings, reports that this has not been the case. The department AP and Chair successfully leveraged the cumulative goodwill and professional respect they had previously established with their faculty to reassure other faculty of the intentions of ADVANCE to ensure a positive work climate for all faculty. This strategy, along with the forward-looking methodology of the CT project, helped provide space in the department for discussion of climate issues of interest to all faculty members (Powell-Coffman 2008c).

- One department (EEOB) created and implemented a new policy—embedded in its governance document— whereby non-tenure-track faculty can participate in all departmental matters other than those involving promotion and tenure decisions.

These departmental efforts and outcomes have influenced and have been influenced by simultaneous efforts being made at the college and university level. Under the leadership of 3 Equity Advisors (Chuck Glatz (ENG), Lisa Larson (LAS), and Jan Thompson (CAL)), and members of the ADVANCE Co-PI team (including the CT researchers), information about and findings from the CT process have been disseminated widely. Also, training tools developed for departmental leaders have been adapted for use more broadly across campus— particularly those training tools for recognizing and addressing unintended gender biases.

III. Round 1 Focal Department ADVANCE Professors' & Chairs' Assessments of Most Successful Departmental Initiatives

ADVANCE Professors and department Chairs were asked to indicate “Which success stories about the ISU ADVANCE Collaborative Transformation project do you think are most important for others to hear about?” Their responses were then organized by department.

- A. Ecology, Evolution, and Organismal Biology (EEOB), Fred Janzen and Jonathan Wendel:
1. More open communication among the faculty in EEOB about issues that previously were less commonly discussed; including the concept of ‘implicit bias’ and work-life balance issues.
 2. Even more proactive steps towards (and discussions about) increasing the diversity of applicant pools for faculty searches.
 3. Consideration of new departmental mechanisms for new parents to spend time with their children; and related discussions regarding family care issues (e.g., care for an elderly or ill family member).
 4. Clarification of norms regarding levels of departmental/college committee work (and other service work) for faculty at different ranks; and related efforts to clarify departmental expectations for faculty via informal meetings between Assistant professors and the department Chair and discussions among senior faculty about best practices for mentoring.
- B. Genetics, Development and Cell Biology (GDCB), Jo Anne Powell-Coffman and Martin Spalding:
1. Discussions about how to increase the number of women in the candidate pool led to the seminar series for promising post-docs.

2. Drafting departmental guidelines to enable new parents to modify work duties so that they may work from home and appropriately prioritize research efforts.
 3. Department Chair's meetings with Assistant professors to clarify questions about tenure, mentoring or any other issue of interest.
 4. Special seminars to increase awareness of scholarly research by Assistant professors (a mentoring issue, as well as providing for more informed faculty evaluation).
 5. During the 2007-2008 academic year, the faculty formally voted to make diversifying the GDCB faculty a long-term goal of the Department.
- C. Materials Science Engineering (MSE), Kristen Constant and Richard LeSar:
1. Explicit discussion among the faculty about ensuring diverse applicant pools during job searches.
 2. Multiple discussions among the faculty (led by K. Constant) on avoiding implicit biases during candidate interviews and during the evaluation of candidates for faculty positions. These discussions are ongoing.
 3. Level of engagement among the faculty about the issue of effective mentoring. These discussions are also ongoing. The department is working to develop a manual of "best practices" for mentoring.
 4. Provision of informational resources to the department (via K. Constant's work with the ADVANCE program) about "best practices" in recruitment of faculty, departmental climate, faculty evaluation processes, and mentoring.

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