DEP IMPACT

MORE THAN
30
DEPARTMENTS HAVE PARTICIPATED SINCE 2006

76.9%
OF ACTION ITEMS WERE IMPLEMENTED

LEARN MORE

To learn more about the Department Enhancement Program (DEP), visit our website:
http://www.dep.iastate.edu
Department Enhancement Program (DEP)
The DEP, originally referred to as Collaborative Transformation, began in 2006. Initially funded through the National Science Foundation, DEP is a part of ADVANCE, which helps to transform university structures, cultures, and practices to recruit, retain, and promote a diverse, highly-qualified, and cohesive faculty.

DEP is now an institutionalized part of Iowa State University. An innovative action-oriented program suited to improve department climates, DEP features a systematic method for collecting and analyzing data from chairs and faculty about the department climate. DEP is designed to cultivate faculty satisfaction, inclusion, and engagement.

Program Components
Academic college deans, college administrators, or department chairs can request DEP for their units.
A trained DEP facilitator conducts separate, confidential 90-minute interviews or focus groups with:
- Department chairs
- Faculty by rank across term, tenure-track and tenure classifications

In exploring the department’s structures, processes, and climate, interviews cover:
- Recruitment and retention of diverse faculty
- Responsibilities in research, teaching, extension, outreach, and service
- Advancement and evaluation
- Mentoring and leadership development
- Resource distribution
- Faculty relations, collegiality, and networking
- Faculty satisfaction
- Career flexibility
- Work-life integration
- Programming and future initiatives
- Facilities, administrative support, and technical support
- Governance and policies

DEP is useful as departmental leaders and faculty prepare for external program reviews, re-configure departmental structures in response to program development and implementation, develop a greater understanding of their strengths and opportunities for growth and support, and other long-range planning.

DEP facilitators adhere to strict Institutional Review Board protocols and obtain the informed consent of all participants. In collaboration with the Research Institute for Studies in Education (RISE), the DEP facilitator analyzes the interview and focus group data and shares group-level findings in the form of a report with the department leadership and faculty. In this report, the DEP facilitator provides recommendations for enhancing department structures, cultures, and practices. As determined by the department, this report, or an executive summary of the report, is shared with the college Dean, Associate Deans, Equity Advisor, and the Assistant Provost for Faculty Development. Based on these recommendations, the chair and the faculty develop an action plan and establish a timeline for implementing the action items they wish to pursue.

"The Department Enhancement Program assisted the faculty of Political Science to develop a more holistic and synergistic approach to how we operate individually and as members of an academic unit. The Department has experienced less turnover and higher productivity in research and teaching. The DEP provided the opportunity to assess our gaps in communication and decision-making across subfields, generations, gender, and faculty status and rank. We became more sensitized to the need for better work-life balance particularly for more junior faculty, and established norms that have made it possible to incorporate more fully term and tenure-track faculty together into a more cohesive entity."

Dr. Mack Shelley, University Professor, Chair of Political Science