

## **Iowa State University Award for Innovative Practices in Career Flexibility, Alfred P. Sloan Foundation**

Iowa State University was one of two universities to be awarded a \$25,000 award for innovative practices from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. Iowa State University was selected for a creative database and tracking system to quantify the benefits that can accrue from flexible career policies and to conduct a cost-benefit analysis of these policies, particularly as they relate to faculty career decisions and productivity.

The development of a Flexible Career Database will be part of ISU's commitment to an integrated set of ISU policies that allow faculty to develop an individualized set of academic goals in accord with department practice and university policy. With these policies, it is the University's goal to create an optimal environment which prioritizes flexible faculty careers as a means to enhance institutional excellence. The database project grant was developed by Susan Carlson, (interim vice president for academic affairs and provost), Claire Andreasen (special assistant to the provost and chair of veterinary pathology), and Marika Jones (director, corporate and foundation relations, ISU Foundation). The database project will be a joint project of the Provost's Office and the Office of Institutional Research, where Gebre Tesfagiorgis (director) and Sandra Gahn (senior analyst) will work with Jason Pontius (PhD student in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies).

As a part of the same competition, five other institutions won \$250,000 accelerator grants to enable the universities to expand and enhance flexible career paths for faculty. The Alfred P. Sloan Awards for Faculty Career Flexibility recognize research universities for their leadership and accomplishments in implementing groundbreaking policies and practices supporting career flexibility for tenured and tenure-track faculty. The awards program was sponsored by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and conducted by the American Council on Education (ACE) with support from the Families and Work Institute.

"One in five eligible research universities applied for the 2006 Sloan Awards," said Claire Van Ummersen, ACE vice president, Center for

Effective Leadership. "The high level of participation reflects a nationwide trend and is evidence of the significance that college and university leaders are placing on career flexibility as a positive factor in influencing the recruitment and retention of valued faculty, particularly women and underrepresented minorities."

The awards program was open to the 259 research extensive and intensive universities as defined in the 2000 Carnegie Classifications. In all, 55 institutions participated in the first round and 25 institutions advanced to the second round.

Applicants were evaluated in a two-part process. During the first round, an institutional survey about the career flexibility offered to tenured and tenure-track faculty (excluding medical schools) was completed. The second round included a faculty survey and development of a university-wide plan for accelerating the development and use of career flexibility programs among faculty. Among the issues considered were faculty recruitment and retention; strengthening faculty commitment, engagement and morale; achieving institutional excellence; and maintaining academic competitiveness in a global market.

A blue ribbon panel of retired university and higher education association presidents, chancellors, and chief executive officers reviewed and rated the plans, including Molly Corbett Broad, former president of the 16-campus University of North Carolina; Rita Colwell, former director of the National Science Foundation; John DiBiaggio, former president of Tufts University (MA), Michigan State University and the University of Connecticut; Stanley Ikenberry, former president of ACE and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; C. Peter Magrath, former president of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, the University of Missouri System, the University of Minnesota, and the State University of New York at Binghamton.