ISU ADVANCE has become Iowa State’s most prominent vehicle to recruit, retain, and advance women and women of color in STEM faculty positions. We are known for a well-managed network, innovative research, and an integrated approach to change. We work within departments using a Collaborative Transformation approach to improve the work environment for all faculty members. 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.

From the National Science Foundation website:

“The goal of the ADVANCE program is to increase the representation and advancement of women in academic science and engineering careers, thereby contributing to the development of a more diverse science and engineering workforce.”

“Institutional Transformation Awards support academic institutional transformation to promote the increased participation and advancement of women scientists and engineers in academe. These awards support innovative and comprehensive programs for institution-wide change.”

http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=5383

Project award size and length:
5 years, 2006-2011. $3.3 million

Our Goals and Major Accomplishments in the First Three Years

Goal 1. To overcome known barriers to the advancement of women faculty in STEM disciplines we have focused on 1) increasing transparency, 2) decreasing isolation, 3) increasing the value of mentoring, and 4) enhancing career flexibility.

Transparency
- Unconscious bias in P&T evaluation and recruitment were discussed in workshops for focal department chairs
- Chairs in focal departments initiated informal meeting with new faculty to discuss tenure expectations
- Faculty recruitment resources developed and disseminated via CD, Web site and workshops.

Isolation
- Events at the university, college and department levels include lectures, workshops, and networking events.

Mentoring
- College-level mentoring, including peer mentoring, provides opportunities for pre-tenure faculty
- ADVANCE Scholars program supports research interaction between women faculty of color and non-ISU Scholars

Flexibility
- National conference on increasing flexibility in STEM faculty careers (October 2008)
- Partnerships with Faculty Senate to pass “Modified Duties Policy”

Goal 2. Identify and eliminate department specific barriers to the advancement of women faculty in STEM disciplines

- Development of the Collaborative Transformation Project with six ISU STEM departments to enhance local climate and support new and established faculty.
- Identification and discussion of common circumstances that currently block faculty success: the importance of spatial proximity, mentoring of assistant and associate professors, democratic participation in departmental governance, family friendly policies, recruitment and retention practices, and gaps between stated ideals and reality. Implementation of department, college, and university-level plans to address these conditions.
- Workshops for all university faculty and administrators were held in April 2008 and January 2009 to share and discuss the findings from the Collaborative Transformation project in the first three focal departments
- Impact of the Collaborative Transformation project will be measured through follow-up surveys: COACHE (2005 and 2009) and AAUDE (2008 and 2010).
Goal 3. Increase the representation of women and underrepresented minorities at senior faculty and leadership ranks

- The College of Engineering Search Committee and Diversity Committee collaborated on making diversity a key part of finalist interviews.
- We are creating a critical mass of top administrators who are aware of, and committed to, improving the status of women and under-represented minorities. Since 2005, five high level academic leadership positions have been filled at Iowa State, three by women, one by an Hispanic male, and one by a white male. Each of these new leaders is committed to ISU ADVANCE Program goals.
- The number of women full professors has been increasing during the current decade. In 2008 there were 101 women full professors, 44 in STEM.

Future Outlook for ISU ADVANCE

- We are at a critical point in the development of our program, with an effective organizational structure and committed participants--from co-PIs to the Executive Vice President and Provost.
- Our Collaborative Transformation project will continue in the first six departments and three additional departments will participate in the last two years.
- Workshops will be presented in the coming year on faculty flexibility and family friendly policies as well as advancement from associate to full professor.
- The Equity Advisors and college representatives will be key to sustainability of the project past the funding period; we are working with deans of the three focal colleges to continue the Equity Advisor positions.
- We have not yet seen the impact of our work in the numbers of women faculty in STEM, but our project is designed to build institutional change in a slower way that will last.
- Our geographic location means we face additional challenges in recruiting and retaining faculty of color in STEM, but next year, we will expand our work with women faculty of color.
- With the Women’s Leadership Consortium and the Executive Vice President and Provost, we plan to produce a portrait of leadership with benchmarks for gender representation.
- We have demonstrable progress in the ISU ADVANCE program, but we also recognize the importance of our continued efforts at institutional transformation.

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July 2009