

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS FOR DEPARTMENT CHAIRS

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Abstract — *The University of Washington's National Science Foundation-funded ADVANCE Center for Institutional Change (CIC) envisions a campus where all science, engineering, and mathematics (SEM) faculty are thriving, properly mentored, and achieving his or her maximum potential. A key focus of the CIC is leadership development. Each academic quarter, the CIC hosts a half-day leadership workshop for department chairs, deans, and emerging leaders. These workshops serve as a forum for cross-college networking and professional development for chairs and emerging leaders. Prior to this program, department chairs received little or no professional development beyond their initial orientation to the department chair position. Evaluations of these workshops have been uniformly high, and department chairs have stated these workshops are the "boot camp" they never got. This paper will provide details about the leadership workshops; offer guidelines for successfully implementing such a program; and give an update on efforts to institutionalize this program across campus.*

Index Terms — *ADVANCE, department chairs, leadership development, professional development*

INTRODUCTION

Institutional transformation as intended by the National Science Foundation's ADVANCE program requires a significant amount of change in attitudes, practices and policies throughout the university community. The success of institutional change hinges largely on the extent to which change occurs at the academic department level [1]-[2]. To that end, the University of Washington's ADVANCE Center for Institutional Change (CIC) established a program of quarterly half-day leadership workshops for department chairs, deans, and emerging leaders. These workshops provide reoccurring opportunities for academic leaders to address issues of equity, leadership, faculty recruitment and advancement, and policy implementation. The workshops are designed to engage academic leaders as critical actors in changing institutional culture.

Academic department chairs are not often prepared to be change agents or administrative managers [2]-[4]. Faculty who have risen to the department chair position are usually recognized leaders in their scholarly fields and have

been trained to be scholars, not managers. Most come to the department chair position with little leadership training beyond leading departmental committees [5]. Department chair orientation and training, if provided, is often once a year and limited to administrative and fiscal responsibilities which represent the tip of the iceberg of a department chair's responsibilities. Often, the more challenging and rewarding experiences of department chairs relate to mentoring faculty and managing their concerns. Gmelch & Miskin [3] found that the responsibilities that chairs rate as most important (i.e. the recruitment and selection of faculty, the evaluation of faculty performance, conflict resolution and leadership) are absent from orientations and campus-based training programs.

While department chairs may seek guidance from online and printed resources targeted at department chairs, such resources are generally not campus-specific enough to be sufficient. National training programs are also available, but on-going campus-based programs are becoming more prevalent as a means to infuse institutional context and procedural norms [6]. As part of its institutional change efforts, the UW ADVANCE program sought to provide department chairs with on-going opportunities to draw from the experience and wisdom of their department chair colleagues and to conscientiously explore topics relevant to equity in science and engineering and the success of their faculty and departments.

This paper first provides background on the University of Washington ADVANCE program. A description of the quarterly leadership workshops and guidelines for how to successfully implement such a program are presented next. The paper concludes with remarks on efforts to institutionalize the leadership workshop program throughout the University of Washington campus.

UW ADVANCE

In October 2001, the University of Washington was one of eight institutions to receive the National Science Foundation ADVANCE Institutional Transformation award to advance women faculty careers in science, engineering, and mathematics (SEM). The five-year cooperative agreement with NSF allows the University of Washington to build on existing programs and catalyze institutional transformation.

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With the grant, the University of Washington created the CIC. (See www.engr.washington.edu/advance for more details.)

The CIC's vision is a campus in which all SEM departments are thriving, all faculty are properly mentored, and each SEM faculty member is achieving his or her maximum potential. The University of Washington believes that cultural changes that are designed to help underrepresented groups invariably improve the environment for everyone. While the CIC's efforts have been focused on 19 science and engineering departments in the College of Engineering and the Science Division of the College of Arts and Sciences, each initiative is evaluated to determine how it can be institutionalized throughout the University of Washington campus.

The CIC's six focus areas are: (1) leadership development for current deans and department chairs, (2) SEM department cultural change, (3) policy transformation, (4) mentoring women in SEM for leadership, (5) transitional support for faculty in SEM, and (6) visiting scholars. This paper will focus on the first area: leadership development.

QUARTERLY LEADERSHIP WORKSHOPS

As part of the leadership development focus, the CIC initiated a quarterly half-day leadership workshop program for department chairs and emerging leaders. For each workshop, the department chairs are encouraged to invite an emerging leader so that other faculty can be exposed to academic leadership issues. These workshops have served as a forum for cross-college networking and professional development.

Prior to ADVANCE, department chairs received little or no professional development beyond their initial orientation to the department chair position. A recent article by a department chair describes initial orientation training as "sitting in large groups being told things we would promptly forget, and getting reams of handouts we'd never find the time to read" [7]. The UW workshops provide those in leadership positions in ADVANCE departments with a better understanding of the structural, psychological, and behavioral barriers to the advancement of faculty, in particular women and underrepresented minorities in SEM. Department chairs have stated these workshops are the "boot camp" they never got. The workshops provide an opportunity to discuss best practices and strategies at the departmental and institutional level. The workshops also address faculty development and leadership issues.

The quarterly leadership workshop model evolved in response to department chair feedback. The first ADVANCE Chairs Leadership Retreat in May 2002 was an off-campus, all-day retreat. It was attended by 18 of the 19 chairs of the ADVANCE participating departments. Feedback from the first workshop included suggesting changing the format from an annual all-day workshop to

quarterly half-day workshops. (Incidentally, the revised format actually creates more time because an academic year is three quarters, hence three half-day workshops.) Department chairs also requested that chairs present departmental case studies, rather than having outside consultants, and that breakout sessions continue to be offered as they provide opportunities to network.

The current leadership workshop structure generally includes an overview presentation to provide relevant research findings or institutional data, followed by two case study discussions. The case study generally consist of two 15-20 minute presentations with 20-30 minutes of discussion. The workshops conclude with a networking lunch. A sample timeline is as follows:

- Overview Presentation (9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.)
- Topic 1 (9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.)
- Break (10:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.)
- Topic 2 (10:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.)
- Networking Lunch (11:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.)

The CIC actively encourages different faculty to lead the case study discussions. To facilitate a more diverse discussion, two faculty leads, one from science and one from engineering, are selected for each topic. In some cases, a department chair facilitates the discussion. In other cases, the faculty discussion leader may not be in a position of leadership but may have a personal experience from which other departments can learn. Faculty have been very forthcoming in sharing what worked well for them and also what did not work well. Hearing from their peers allows faculty to identify a potential resource on campus for the discussed topic. The model also facilitates sharing of best practices.

Another way to facilitate cross-pollination of ideas and best practices is to involve departments from different colleges. While department chairs within a college may have regular opportunities to gather, chairs may have fewer opportunities to network with their peers from other colleges. Science and engineering are well matched disciplines as they often encounter similar challenges, and department chairs have expressed their appreciation for the cross-college networking opportunities.

The inclusion of emerging leaders is another important component of the UW workshop model. In addition to exposing other faculty to academic leadership issues, this model takes a proactive approach to building the leadership pipeline, by identifying faculty who may be potentially interested in academic administration and leadership positions. Including emerging faculty allows the CIC to expand its sphere of influence and helps department chairs cultivate department allies. Department chairs are encouraged to invite emerging leaders from underrepresented groups, which helps ensure that the next generation of leadership will include women and faculty of color. Emerging leaders have found the workshops

enlightening, particularly because many workshops topics may directly impact the faculty member's career.

When selecting workshop topics, the CIC solicits input from the advisory Leadership Team, which includes deans and faculty from both colleges, and from the participating department chairs. For each workshop topic, diversity and gender issues are woven into the discussion. While the workshop topics are important to the success of women and underrepresented minority faculty, they are ultimately relevant for all faculty. Rather than hold a generic discussion on the issues, discussion leaders are encouraged to include specific gender and diversity examples when applicable.

The workshops are inexpensive, with the only costs being room rental, catering, and handouts. Catering typically includes a light breakfast (coffee and pastries) and a lunch buffet. Coordinating workshop logistics require some staff time, but are generally low effort. The amount of preparation time is manageable because the presentations are given by the invited speakers, who are generally faculty.

These workshops have catalyzed a change in how department chairs interact with each other. The workshops foster more collaborative and open discussions and have helped make more transparent some of the challenges that department chairs face.

Leadership Workshop Topics

To date, five quarterly workshops have been held. Each workshop focuses on one to three topics of concern to our department chairs. Past topics include:

- Dual Career Hires
- Transition from Associate to Full Professor
- Faculty Development Opportunities
- Dealing with Difficult People
- Student Ratings of STEM Women Faculty
- Feedback and Delivering Bad News
- Family Leave and Tenure Clock Extensions
- Nominating your Faculty for Awards and Recognition
- Building Consensus among Your Faculty
- Building Job Offers

Some discussions result in the production of a handout to summarize best practices or to provide guidelines on navigating a particular policy or practice. All handouts are made available to the general public via the UW ADVANCE webpage (<http://www.engr.washington.edu/advance/workshops/>).

Department chairs and their faculty have reported using the handouts as references at a later date.

Evaluation Results

Evaluation of the workshops has been uniformly high. Participants have repeatedly cited that the most valuable part

of the workshops has been that they learned something new. Presentations by department chairs and other faculty and sharing experiences with others have also been highly valued. The workshops have been perceived to be an excellent medium for sharing experiences, ideas and helpful approaches.

Topics which have received particularly high ratings included: Awards Nomination and Recognition (5.0 on a 5-point Likert type scale); Family Leave and Tenure Clock Extension (4.9); Building Job Offers (4.8); Dual Career Policy (4.6); Transition from Associate to Full (4.6); Building Consensus (4.6); and Providing Feedback and Delivering Bad News (4.5).

Workshops were well attended by department chairs and emerging leaders from both the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Engineering. To date, department chairs have invited 43 different emerging leaders to participate in the program. Twenty-two of these emerging leaders were women, and thirteen of them were faculty of color.

GUIDELINES FOR SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENTING A LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP PROGRAM

The quarterly leadership workshops have been implemented in such a way as to respond to the feedback of department chairs. Based on the CIC experience, the following guidelines for creating a successful leadership workshop program are offered:

- **Hold regular gatherings:** Quarterly half-day workshops are more effective than annual day-long workshops. Regular gatherings provide more opportunities to interact and build community among the department chairs and emerging leaders. Moreover, the quarterly gatherings allow ongoing opportunities to address professional leadership development.
- **Use case studies:** Faculty benefit from learning from their peers. Case studies are an excellent way to provide campus-relevant concrete examples. Not only have faculty enjoyed the case studies, but they are now able to identify a resource on campus whom they could approach about the particular topic.
- **Encourage different discussion leaders:** For each topic the CIC invites two faculty members (one from the College of Engineering and one from the College of Arts and Sciences) to lead the discussion. Changing the discussion leaders increases the number of people who become actively involved in the workshops and also creates opportunities for shared wisdom.
- **Invite emerging leaders:** Rather than wait until a faculty member assumes a leadership position to expose them to academic leadership issues, department chairs are encouraged to invite an emerging leader to join them at the workshop. Many of these challenging leadership issues can be difficult to navigate. By including

emerging leaders, the program helps to identify a department ally for the department chair and build a leadership pipeline.

- **Mix cognate fields across colleges:** Mixing cognate fields creates opportunities for cross-college networking. It also provides opportunities to hear different ideas and learn best practices from other departmental units which have similar field-specific issues.
- **Strongly encourage participation:** While faculty may be reluctant at first to give up their time to attend the workshops, department chairs and faculty have reported that they find the workshops extremely valuable.
- **Gather workshop topic suggestions from the participants and an advisory board:** It is critically important to address issues that are of real concern to department chairs. At the end of each workshop, an evaluation form solicits ideas for future workshop topics.
- **Weave diversity elements throughout:** For each topic, include gender and diversity related content. Women and underrepresented minority faculty may be disproportionately affected by the topics discussed at the workshops.

INSTITUTIONALIZING THE LEADERSHIP WORKSHOPS

Since the inception of the grant, the then-president and then-provost of the UW were very supportive of institutionalization efforts. In the midst of the grant the university president left for another institution and the former provost is now serving as interim president. In the Fall 2003 quarter, the CIC convened an ad hoc committee consisting of deans from several UW colleges not directly involved with the ADVANCE grant. The committee served as a forum to share information about ADVANCE and to consider which best practices should be institutionalized throughout the UW.

A prime candidate for institutionalization are these quarterly leadership workshops. Much interest has been expressed throughout campus for providing department chairs and other faculty with additional opportunities for leadership development. Although the University of Washington does hold a one-day central administration leadership workshop, there is a recognized need for additional leadership development opportunities for department chairs and deans.

The ad hoc institutionalization committee noted that some of ADVANCE's workshop topics are generic enough to be applicable to the broader campus. These ADVANCE modules could provide a basic toolkit for administrators, although there would be a need for additional programming beyond the scope of these modules. The committee further noted that all faculty could benefit from the information shared at these workshops.

Currently, the University of Washington's Training and Development, a division of the Office of Human Resources, is developing a faculty strategic leadership development program, which builds on its successful strategic leadership program (SLP) for staff. The SLP is a centrally funded, comprehensive training for supervisors within the UW community. The faculty model of the SLP is specifically incorporating elements from the CIC quarterly leadership workshop model, namely the case studies, peer presentations, and faculty discussions.

In addition to the SLP model, ADVANCE is continuing discussions with deans throughout campus to investigate how to further institutionalize this successful leadership development model.

SUMMARY

The quarterly leadership workshops which have been developed by the University of Washington's CIC are a successful model for addressing department chair and faculty leadership and professional development. The workshops have impacted the effectiveness of current department chairs by giving them an opportunity to network across colleges, build a sense of team, and be exposed to topics which affect the success of their faculty. The emerging leader component of the model addresses leadership succession by identifying faculty who may be potentially interested in academic administration and leadership positions. These regular opportunities to engage in professional and leadership development are a model that can be implemented in other arenas.

A supplemental resource to the leadership workshop program which has been developed to assist in leadership development is the CIC's Faculty Retention Toolkit (see <http://www.engr.washington.edu/advance/resources/Retention>). While the information provided in this toolkit addresses faculty retention as well as departmental leadership, this resource should be supplemented with professional development experiences.

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INVESTING IN Department Chairs

By Susan K. Gardner
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INVESTING IN DEPARTMENT CHAIRS TO CREATE INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

"My department chair is a wonderful role model."

"My chair is interested in all aspects of the department."

"Our chair is fantastic. She creates a very positive climate for all."

*"There is poor communication between our chair and the faculty.
The chair makes decisions without discussion."*

*"My department chair bullies faculty members and it creates an environment
where people are afraid to disagree with him."*

*"I have started keeping my office door shut to avoid having the department chair
come in and say inappropriate things to me."*

The above examples show two extremes: a department where the chair is highly valued by its faculty and contributes to a positive climate and, conversely, a chair who is seen as a bully and is perceived as a detriment to the work environment. While it is likely that many academic departments fall somewhere in between these two extremes, it is also clear that department chairs play a significant role in the department's work environment and climate. As Robert Cipriano (2011) put it, "Department chairs set the tone and culture in their department" (p. 19).

Culture and tone make a difference to faculty. For example, Monk-Turner and Fogerty (2010) found that faculty members who feel more welcome in their departments are more productive than those who feel less welcome.

Similarly, Burnett and associates (2012) found that a more collegial department resulted in less attrition among faculty. Department chairs are vital to faculty productivity and retention. Department chairs matter.

The motivation for this article comes from our experience as administrators, researchers of topics related to faculty and graduate studies, and our involvement in major institutional transformation grants funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) ADVANCE program. These grants are designed to foster organizational change to create more hospitable environments for women in disciplines related to science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM).

We work at two very different types of research universities (University of Maine and Washington State University),

but share experience with the important role chairs play to carry out institutional transformation. As we conducted surveys about faculty job satisfaction and department climate we repeatedly heard quotes like those above; we also found correlates and similar outcomes related to the research on chairs like those cited above. For example, at the University of Maine, we learned that department chairs play a key role in creating a department culture supportive of work-life balance. At Washington State University, we found that chairs play an important role in faculty performance and satisfaction as well as in recruitment and retention.

Chairs interpret the university mission to departments and their faculty in leading organizational change. The institutional transformation that NSF was seeking from grantees and the type of change anticipated by ADVANCE grants depended to a great extent on changing departments, with a focus on the department chair. Without department chairs' cooperation and support, however, such change was doomed to fail.

In this perspectives piece, we describe our efforts in utilizing literature and research to connect to, support, and partner with our department chairs to create positive cultures and climates for our faculty. Our hope is that this information can support other leaders in supporting organizational change.

UNDERSTANDING DEPARTMENT CHAIRS

The department chair is arguably one of the most difficult roles in a college or university. These individuals straddle the often-precious line between colleague and supervisor, between faculty and administrator, and between the present and the future. For many, the role is a temporary one, a time

they take away from their scholarship and teaching to serve their departments, knowing they will ultimately return to their faculty role.

The work of Robert Cipriano (2011), Jeffrey Buller (2006), Walter Gmelch (1995), and others reveals several things about department chairs and the context in which they work. First, most department chairs tend to take on the role out of a dedication to their unit as a service role, rather than because of a desire for upward mobility. A recent study of chairs by Gmelch, Roberts, Ward, and Hirsch (2017) found that the vast majority of chairs (95%) are not interested in moving beyond the chair role into any other leadership position. Second, most department chairs do not receive training or professional development to learn the complex duties the position encompasses. And, third, for all its complexity and work, the role of department chair is often thankless, stressful, and, in some instances, minimally compensated.

Chairs are critical to fostering change and developing faculty, yet many lack training, support, and compensation. How can chairs be enticed into a key role in organizational change when the role is unappealing and unsupported? What support can be provided to assist chairs in initiating and maintaining change?

CREATING CHANGE

The key point we want to emphasize is that without chairs lasting institutional change will not take place. Therefore, investing in department chairs was a central focus of our organizational change strategies at both institutions.

Change is an inherent part of higher education but nevertheless difficult to intentionally and successfully accomplish. Kezar and Eckel (2002) studied several large-scale change

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(Editor's note: Dr. Kelly Ward passed away suddenly as this article was in press. Her co-author, Susan Gardner, writes, "Kelly was a beloved colleague, mentor, friend, mother, and wife. Her scholarship and her leadership worked in tandem and this article reflects that important value. She will be sorely missed.")

projects at various universities and suggested five components to support lasting change:

- 1) Staff development
- 2) A robust design
- 3) Senior administrative support
- 4) Collaborative leadership
- 5) Visible action

We use these components to frame the role of chairs in facilitating long-term and meaningful institutional change.

Staff Development

What does it mean to support chairs when the position is, in the words of one of our chairs, a position that “no one aspires to; nobody wants to do it”? Moreover, from the research on department chairs, we know that chairs are a short-term workforce that receive little training in taking on the chair role.

Given this context, it is perhaps not immediately obvious why we chose to focus so centrally on department chairs to undergird our change efforts. While these chairs were arguably short-term administrators, they were also critical liaisons between faculty members and the administration. They played an important role in shaping and driving cultural change and helped realize institutional missions. They oversaw department climate initiatives and created environments that could entice new faculty to join them, including assisting in faculty development and promotion efforts, and were critical to hiring a quality and diverse faculty. And, for some, they used this department chair experience to consider continued upward mobility as future deans, provosts, or presidents.

Supporting department chairs meant professional development. As we detail below, the emphasis on the staff development of chairs was vital to every aspect of the other four components of the change model and efforts instituted on our campuses.

A Robust Design

When deans, provosts, or faculty development professionals consider implementing professional development and support for department chairs, they should begin by thinking of the whole rather than individual parts. Specifically, professional development and support for chairs should not be stand-alone events or activities. Instead, those involved with planning such efforts should think about how a series of events and initiatives can comprehensively represent a larger and more cohesive campus-wide effort in training chairs, developing both hard and soft skills.

For example, at the University of Maine, we were focused on several larger goals as part of the ADVANCE grant efforts related to faculty retention. Accordingly, each year’s activities and professional development programs for department chairs were organized around a larger theme (e.g., creating positive department climates, faculty collegiality, and creating supportive work-life environments). The events

for the year were all organized around the theme. Such an approach helped spread our message in a myriad of ways, allowed for depth, and provided continuity in conversations throughout the year and beyond. Such an approach to staff development for chairs is a way to create community among chairs and focus on a particular topic that is important to the institution.

Senior Administrative Support

Just as chairs are important to carrying out institutional change and supporting faculty, they can only be successful with support from senior administrators. Without support from deans, chairs will find it difficult to lead change and support their faculty. Similarly, without support from the provost, deans may not always see the need to support chairs’ professional development efforts or be held accountable for it. An important component to a comprehensive approach to department chair professional development, therefore, is the support of senior administrators on campus.

A common theme in research about organizational change is the need for a design that is simultaneously bottom-up and top-down. For chairs who exist in the liminal space of administration and faculty the bottom up-top down approach is essential. In our work and in our research, we learned how vital upper administrative support is to gain credibility to lead change and to showcase the support that department chairs have on their campuses.

Support and buy-in from deans was vital to the ADVANCE efforts at both of our institutions. It was important to understand how the context of a given institutional environment would impact our efforts in gaining and using this support. At both Washington State University and the University of Maine we learned early on that, despite the tremendous support of the president and provost expressed in campus-wide emails and mailings to encourage participation in events related to our grants, department chairs ultimately were more attuned to requests and information from their deans. Deans, however, were more apt to listen to the provost. Finding the unique levers and the flow of influence was therefore a vital part of the robust design in place to foster change.

The emphasis on the staff development of chairs was vital to every aspect of the other four components of the change model and efforts instituted on our campuses.

Upper administrators could create many new policies but without department chairs actually supporting the policies, the new policies were not enacted or enforced.

Similarly, we learned from the Washington State University grant experience how important it was to have senior administrative support and to have mechanisms in place to foster and communicate that support within units. Each college had a liaison to the grant who met regularly and were “in the know” about grant activities and therefore could be in constant communication with their administrative colleagues, including chairs as well as faculty. The ADVANCE program’s liaisons have been supported beyond the grant and continue to be integral to maintaining communication.

Collaborative Leadership

Having support of presidents, provosts, and deans is an important part of the investment a college or university makes in its department chairs. At the same time, there are limits to top-down leadership in any change initiative. For example, in some of the policy efforts pursued in our ADVANCE grants we learned early on that upper administrators could create many new policies but without department chairs actually supporting the policies, the new policies were not enacted or enforced.

How to share such information while creating buy-in can pose a challenge. For example, at the University of Maine we knew that department chair training had never been an annual occurrence nor had it been required. Understanding our university’s culture as one that is not particularly oriented toward mandatory training, we sought instead to make the training optional but valuable enough that chairs would want to attend.

One way we achieved buy-in for these professional development opportunities was to tie them to the campus priority of faculty retention. At a place like the University of Maine, faculty lines were rarely plentiful and searches were often halted due to budget cuts. Therefore, the focus on how to retain the faculty members already in place was a motivator for many chairs. At Washington State University, we tied themes related to the ADVANCE grant to chair and director meetings. Deans and provosts also participated, therefore making participation a strong expectation.

Buy-in through a collaborative orientation that involved all levels of administrators as well as key faculty leaders was an approach that worked at both institutions. For example, at Maine we involved a changing group of experienced chairs to join with us to design the chair training and facilitate it each year. The collaborative model worked well. In the five years of the grant at the University of Maine, up to 80% of department chairs attended this professional development in a given year, and the large majority attended at least four other voluntary professional development events.

At Washington State University, collaborative leadership was carried out by using the liaisons within each college to communicate information about the grant activities to their units and also the collaboration between the provost and deans. These collaborative efforts helped facilitate communication and increase participation in grant activities and have continued. Collaborative leadership was particularly important to support faculty recruitment. Each college had a faculty member or administrator provide direction and training for search committees on how to broaden pools of applicants and on best practices to conduct better searches. These “trainers” had specialized training through the grant and thus were able to provide search committee training and support in their departments. The liaisons and the search committee trainers were critical as collaborators with the grant team and their units. Through collaboration, Washington State University has continued support of the grant activities to bring attention to the support of women in disciplines across the university.

Visible Action

Another key part of change initiatives, according to Kezar and Eckel (2002), is visible action. Initial buy-in is vital but, over time, such support for change will wane if stakeholders do not see visible actions that continue to come from change initiatives.

A key component of visible action at Washington State University is broad dissemination of ADVANCE activities and involvement in policy development. For example, the website is widely disseminated so chairs are aware of the resources available to support faculty. Further, ADVANCE has continually collaborated with units across campus to co-sponsor events (e.g., a publishing workshop and visiting speakers). The ADVANCE initiative also provides grants for research support and external mentorship that have been visible. Another element of visible (and sustainable) action is the role that ADVANCE has played in policy development (e.g., updating the language related to parental leave policies). Such visibility has promoted ADVANCE as not just a project, but as a resource and organizational unit that gets things done.

At the University of Maine, the department chair development and support efforts sought to demonstrate continued development and responsiveness to the chairs’ concerns. Through regular data collection efforts—such as chair surveys, interviews, and the evaluation data from various events—we learned about chairs’ needs, desires, and gaps

What we learned from both of our experiences was the importance of using data to guide actions and to consistently and persistently highlight the messages to chairs to keep the goals of the grant visible and frequently revisit them.

in information. One program we created, based on surveys, was a regular Department Chair Breakfast to help promote connection to other chairs on campus for advice and support. The breakfast events were successful because they fit the need of chairs. The sessions were informal and based on topics suggested by the chairs and related to the theme of faculty retention.

What we learned from both of our experiences was the importance of using data to guide actions and to consistently and persistently highlight the messages to chairs to keep the goals of the grant visible and frequently revisit them.

CONCLUSION

Faculty are integral to carrying out teaching, research, and service missions at their institutions. Without support from department chairs, faculty are may end up dissatisfied

and even leave. Chairs are vital to recruiting a quality and diverse faculty and providing leadership and direction for them. Chairs, however, are also a short-term and sometimes reluctant workforce that often goes unattended and lacks proper orientation, training, and support.

For institutions looking to create stronger chair leadership, including broadened participation of chairs in change initiatives and more engagement for faculty development and recognition, we have offered a framework to develop and monitor chair support. The examples we provide from our own institutional change initiatives are meant to stimulate thinking for what is possible and necessary to support chairs in any given organizational setting. The health and future of higher education depends on a quality and diverse faculty and knowledgeable chairs to support them. ☐

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