UNH ADVANCE: Improving Campus Climate Through Fair and Equitable Practices, Policies, and Leadership Development

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Overview
UNH ADVANCE is working to initiate sustainable institutional transformation with the overall goal of increasing the number, retention, and success of women faculty, primarily but not solely in the STEM disciplines, by empowering them to succeed and establishing quick-action ability for retention. Key initiatives implemented to date include:

- GEAR-UP, focused on search committees.
- REAL, focused on leadership development.
- TRACKING OUR SUCCESS, focused on research and evaluation to support the key initiatives.

Reaching Excellence in Academic Leadership (REAL)
The REAL Committee is developing a program for chairs and program directors based on interactive theatre through two face-to-face seminars and multimedia “boosters”. Learning goals for the program include:

- Increase participants’ understanding of what climate is.
- Increase participants’ understanding of the advantages of positive campus climate.
- Increase participants’ understanding of what factors enhance a positive campus climate.
- Increase participants’ level of confidence in their ability to create positive climate in their role as chair/director.
- Increase skills to enhance and change climate at the department level.

REAL Training Description

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<th>WORKSHOP 1 (late Spring)</th>
<th>BOOSTER (Summer)</th>
<th>WORKSHOP 2 (early Fall)</th>
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<td>Workshop centered on a series of short “activation plays” using applied theatre.</td>
<td>Multimedia material will be distributed to participants between workshops.</td>
<td>Workshop centered on discussion of case studies relevant to leadership.</td>
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Tracking Our Success

One of the primary measures of our success will be the effect of the REAL and GEAR-UP programs on faculty representation and perceived climate at UNH. Data will be collected through annual climate surveys and pre-post measures of participants in the REAL program.

- The 2013 Faculty Climate Survey administered in Fall 2013 received over a 50% response rate from faculty.
- A longitudinal field experiment will be conducted in conjunction with the REAL program. Chairs and directors will participate in the REAL program in cohorts by college over the next 3 years.
- Data from the climate survey and pre/post seminar surveys will be used to gather information on chair/director participants’ ability and readiness to improve the support and climate for STEM faculty women.

Experimental Design

(O = Observation; T = Treatment)

Gender Equity And Recruitment of Underrepresented People (GEAR UP)

The GEAR UP committee developed a 2.5 hour faculty search committee training seminar. Eighty-one members (46 men, 35 women) of 15 STEM faculty and senior administrative staff search committees attended the first seminar on December 5, 2013. The seminar used interactive theatre as a medium for introducing content about fair and equitable search practices, microaggressions, and implicit bias.

Evaluation of GEAR UP Seminar

An evaluation survey of the GEAR UP program was developed in collaboration with UNH ADVANCE external evaluator, Dr. Mariko Chang. The survey instrument consisted of 6 Likert-type items and 5 open-ended items.

Results

Feedback overall was positive and 96% of the participants indicated that they would recommend the seminar to a colleague. In addition:

- 93% strongly agreed or agreed that the workshop increased their understanding of how gender impacts the evaluation of candidates.
- 93% strongly agreed or agreed that the workshop increased their understanding of how microaggressions and/or implicit biases impact the evaluation of candidates.
- 74% strongly agreed or agreed that they learned ways to reduce gender biases that affect the evaluation of candidates.
- 68% strongly agreed or agreed that they learned ways to eliminate or reduce the impact of microaggressions and/or implicit biases in the evaluation of candidates.

Participants’ responses indicate that this initial seminar was more effective in increasing the understanding of issues than in providing participants with ways to deal with these issues. The GEAR UP committee is working on revising the program based on the results.

Suggestions for Improvement

- Provide tools to prevent/address these problems; demonstrate successful practices
- Incorporate more time for discussion
- Shorten overall length (tighten pacing)
- Too stereotypical; make more realistic
- Videotape performance and put on-line

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