

Becoming Leaders: Current Needs of Brown STEM Women Associate Professors

Results of the March 11th Focus Group

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Overview

- Purpose
- Method
 - Discussion questions
- Results
 - Interest in ADVANCE leadership programs
 - Work-family balance
 - Current needs from ADVANCE
 - Current needs from the University
- Next Steps

Purpose

- Gather info from STEM women associate profs
 - Interest in pursuing University leadership positions
 - Needs to attain such positions
 - 2 specific ADVANCE initiatives
 - Administrator Shadowing Program: shadow a senior University administrator and work on a semester-long project that would have institutional impact
 - Leadership Support Fund: provides women scientists with the means to attend administrator training or leadership programs provided by other institutions

Method

- Guided “needs assessment”
 - March 11, 2010
 - 6 (out of 11)STEM women associate professors
 - 55% participated in focus group
 - Discussion lasted approximately one hour

Discussion Questions

- **General discussion questions included**
 - Is there interest in administrative leadership among STEM women associate professors?
 - What types of leader do you want to become? What type of leadership role do you want?
 - What resources do you need to become this type of leader? What do you need to achieve that success? What types of barriers exist?
 - Currently, the ADVANCE Administrator Shadowing Program has received little interest from tenured STEM women faculty. What would make such a program more appealing?
 - What types of interactions with senior administrators would be helpful in achieving your overall career goals?

Results: ADVANCE Programs

- Interest in Administrator Shadowing Program
 - Identified as being beneficial to career goals
 - Barriers
 - Discouraged by department chair
 - *“I can tell you from my experience I’ve talked quite a bit about applying for these, but I always face the hurdle within my department ... I would really greatly benefit from having the support for teaching release for even one semester but whenever I’ve talked about this with my chair it’s like “oh but you have so many courses to teach and we can’t do this ... we don’t have the flexibility ... capacity for you to go on leave”*

Results: ADVANCE Programs

- Interest in Administrator Shadowing Program
 - Identified as being beneficial to career goals
 - Barriers
 - Discouraged by department chair
 - Viewed negatively by department
 - “Waste of time” and “black mark”
 - *“One of the reasons that I thought hard about the Administrator Shadowing Program but had never followed through with an application is that I know in my department it would not only not be considered a positive action for me to participate in this program, it would be considered a black mark ... ‘My God, she is wasting her time on that’...”*

Results: ADVANCE Programs

- Interest in Administrator Shadowing Program
 - Identified as being beneficial to career goals
 - Barriers
 - Discouraged by department chair
 - Viewed negatively by department
- Participation would *“take them away”* from leadership pathway
 - Excel at research and within disciplines
 - *“I see my path to leadership as excellence in my research discipline ... I would value more programs that would help me excel in my research”*

Results: ADVANCE Programs

- Interest in Leadership Support Fund
 - Barriers
 - Programs not applicable
 - Something shorter in duration
 - *“Didn’t take time away from the only things I see the university valuing, which are my research productivity, publications and grants and so as long as the university doesn’t value leadership ... then at this point in my life ... I can’t afford to do these things”*
 - *“Didn’t see anything that looked good or of high quality”*

Results: Work-Family Balance

- Major impediment is “lack of time”
 - *“Mid-career the major goal in front of you is to be promoted to full professor... but you have all of these other things you have to do, you have to teach, you have to excel in your scholarship, you might want to take advantage of some sort of leadership role in the university, but the problem is there is not enough time to do everything”*

Results: Work-Family Balance

- Major impediment is “lack of time”
 - Outside draws limit productivity and progress
 - Childcare, housework, etc.
 - *“If I had back the 19 hours a week I put towards household labor ... I would gladly become a leader in my field, it would be easy, it would be fun”*
 - AAUP article

Results: Work-Family Balance

- Major impediment is “lack of time”
- Belief that other universities do “a better job”
 - *“They provide supplements, for faculty for domestic help and childcare ... and probably help for other domestic issues”*
 - Current programs [like Back-Up Care] *“not tailored”* to needs of faculty and *“do not work for us”*
 - Staff and faculty have different needs

Results: Current Needs (ADVANCE)

- Mentoring programs
 - “Excellent” and “rewarding”
 - Should continue after the end of ADVANCE grant

Results: Current Needs (ADVANCE)

- Mentoring programs
- ADVANCE as a facilitator
 - Communicate with department chairs
 - “We award you this [Administrator Shadowing] grant and then they [ADVANCE] really administered it thoroughly, made it all work with your department and your department said ‘great – you got this award, congratulations’ and here it is all set”

Results: Current Needs (ADVANCE)

- Mentoring programs
- ADVANCE as a facilitator
- Continued department chair training
 - *“Reeducate and make improve understanding of ... senior faculty, department and chairs and administrators”*

Results: Current Needs (ADVANCE)

- Mentoring programs
- ADVANCE as a facilitator
- Continued department chair training
- Short-term, on-campus leadership programs
 - Time commitment is limited
 - Take advantage of something that does not infringe on the demands of their job and things that the University values

Results: Current Needs (ADVANCE)

- Mentoring programs
- ADVANCE as a facilitator
- Continued department chair training
- Short-term, on-campus leadership programs
- Time management programs
 - Effective lab management
 - Training of lab personnel, budgets, project management
 - “There has to be a better way to do this than the way I do it”
 - Managing work-life balance

Results: Current Needs (University)

- Family-work benefits
 - “Real childcare benefit”
 - Financial benefit for support and services that would help ease these “outside drains”
 - Brown prescreening service that links faculty to vetted providers
 - Move faculty meetings & colloquia times ensure 5:00 PM conclusion

Results: Current Needs (University)

- Family-work benefits
- Advancing research careers
 - Pathway to leadership through research
 - Seed funds for new, innovative, and collaborative research
 - Awards similar to “Salomon” awards

Results: Current Needs (University)

- Family-work benefits
- Advancing research careers
- General atmosphere
 - “No value” placed on leadership in some departments
 - Need for Brown to recognize mentoring
 - *“A lot of time is spent in the mentoring role [of students and other faculty] ... if there is any way for ADVANCE to get institutional recognition of that because that is enormous ...”*
 - Vital to the university but not a factor in promotion
 - “Zero factor”

Next Steps

- Follow-up focus group with participants
 - Discuss possible programs developed by ADVANCE
 - Build programs tailored to the needs of Brown mid-career STEM women faculty