

**TO:** Prem Paul, PI and Vice Chancellor for Research and Economic Development, University of Nebraska, Lincoln

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**FROM:** ADVANCE-Nebraska External Advisory Board, Laura Kramer (Montclair State, Emerita), Carol Muller (Stanford), Cheryl Schrader (Boise State University), Donald Tomaskovic-Devey (University of Massachusetts), and Joyce Yen (University of Washington)

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This review took place in year 1.5 of a five year National Science Foundation supported ADVANCE grant to the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. After reviewing documents produced by the ADVANCE team and the external evaluator Ann Austin, the UNL ADVANCE External Advisory Board met on April 5-6 with the ADVANCE PIs, staff, and various stakeholders in the UNL community. We came away impressed with the rapid progress on the team in identifying barriers to women in the STEM disciplines on campus and forging locally appropriate solutions to expand opportunities and forge a positive working environment for all faculty on the Nebraska campus.

We point out the visible strengths of ADVANCE-Nebraska's work to date and make suggestions as to the next steps that the campus should consider taking.

#### **Strengths of Initial Work by ADVANCE-Nebraska**

- The direct administration of the program, by Dr. Holmes (Director) and Ms. Hochstein (Project Manager) was very impressive.
- The physical location of the ADVANCE project offices, in proximity to both academic affairs and research leadership, is appropriate and signals the central administration's support to the campus community of ADVANCE.
- The internal advisory board, Recruit and Promote committees all show enthusiastic support for the ADVANCE program. These people are important resources for the institutionalization of ADVANCE efforts at UNL.
- The Recruit and Promote committees have clear goals and seem poised to make strong contributions to UNL.
- The solid analysis of the ADVANCE team on STEM faculty's social and research networks is an important source of information on the careers of faculty, and confirms that career isolation is a problem that needs to be addressed.
- Similarly, the trend analysis of women's employment in STEM fields confirms that there is a problem on the Nebraska campus that needs to be addressed.

- The COACHE survey revealed particular problems in the career satisfaction of Associate level male and female professors on the Nebraska campus that should be incorporated into the goals of the ADVANCE team and senior administration.
- The dual career program was implemented rapidly and has already had initial successes in expanding opportunities for women scientists. There is a clear opportunity to expand this success beyond the campus.
- As is common in similar projects, the ADVANCE team tried things that did not work (e.g. recruitment ambassadors). Admirably, team members are quickly altering and adapting their plans as they move forward.
- The ADVANCE grant is a strong base on which to build institutional excellence at UNL in faculty recruitment, retention, and development.

## Opportunities Moving Forward

### *Leadership*

- The year two mark provides an opportunity for the co-PIs and PI to reevaluate their role and the goals of the grant. The co-PIs must provide increased strategic leadership for the ADVANCE agenda as part of this mid-grant review and the plan for institutionalizing ADVANCE goals.
- It is important to get the PI group together soon and consistently. This may require senior leadership.
- We were impressed by the external evaluation of Ann Austin and recommend that the next co-PI meeting discuss the *Issues to Consider and Recommendations*.
- It is important for the ADVANCE project to reconnect with academic affairs. Project goals will need public and administrative support from academic affairs in order to be successful.
- The PIs might consider targeting the proposed Faculty of Life Science as a strategic arena for implementing ADVANCE goals.
- The Institute of Agricultural and Natural Resources was not represented during our visit and we suspect that leadership commitment in that unit will need to be cultivated at the Senior Vice Chancellor level.
- Leadership development for faculty in general will strengthen the role of mid-career faculty in the university.
- Despite significant turn-over in senior academic affairs leadership, all efforts should be made to incorporate results into the goals of academic administration.
- It is well established that the practice of specifying positions narrowly will limit the diversity of recruitment pools. We met significant resistance from campus leadership on this point.

### *Institutionalizing ADVANCE Goals*

- At the third year NSF site visit, the expectation will be that institutional transformation has been initiated and that planning is well underway to institutionalize ADVANCE goals at UNL.

- The goal of this grant is institutional transformation and the team members should keep that goal in the forefront.
- The plan to locate administrative leadership for ADVANCE in the Vice Chancellor's office under the direction of Evelyn Jacobson is a reasonable interim plan, prior to incorporation of ADVANCE goals into the permanent administrative structure. The Associate Vice Chancellor for Faculty Development might be an appropriate level for line responsibility for institutionalizing the ADVANCE program.
- We did not have a sense of clear leadership in the Arts & Science or Engineering Deans' offices for the institutional transformation agenda.
- Accountability for the representation and career progress of all faculty, including women, must reside in the chain of authority that reaches down from the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs (VCAA) to Departments, with consistently evaluated metrics for success. Chairs must be accountable to Deans and Deans to the VCAA.
- There should be accountability for ADVANCE goals up the chain of command. The Vice Chancellor's office should hold deans and departments accountable for the hiring and promotion of women.
- In addition to the current focus on hiring and retention, ADVANCE results suggests that the campus should be considering the strategic recruitment of senior and mid-career women to provide leadership and increase density of women scientists and engineers on campus.
- By regularly raising ADVANCE in their conversations, senior administrators, from the Associate Dean level on up, could indicate the normative nature of ADVANCE goals. For example, information about ADVANCE could be included in materials distributed to senior-level administration interview candidates, as well as faculty candidates. Administrators from Academic Affairs and Research and Economic Development could include ADVANCE on the list of things they address with the various senior-level interview candidates. Such conversations would demonstrate the institutional commitment to and importance of ADVANCE goals to candidates.

#### *ADVANCE Activity*

- ADVANCE's leadership team members should redirect their efforts toward the crucial if difficult issues of cultural change and cultivating the visible support of campus leadership. You have identified the problems, developed some responses, and now it is time to move toward the institutionalization phase of the project.
- It is common for ADVANCE programs in their second year to have to expand staffing as faculty-lead program activities expand. Consider expanding staffing, which could potentially include student and/or administrative support staff.
- The ADVANCE project should connect with the Diversity Initiative, since they are likely to have similar goals and needs as the campus moves forward to increase career support for all faculty.
- ADVANCE-Nebraska should consider establishing committees of ADVANCE supporters to take over planning and implementation of current ADVANCE programs.

- Target senior administrators to advocate for ADVANCE goals.
- Identify influential faculty on campus for ADVANCE outreach.
- You do not need the second COACHE survey; instead, use these resources to deepen the social network analysis or to pursue other project needs.
- Professional development opportunities should be provided for the director.
- Think about what went well and less well from this visit to help organize the NSF site visit for next year.