# 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 reoccuring 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 intitutionalize 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 tranformation.

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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. (Incidently, 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 pasteries) and a lunch buffet. Coordinating workshop logistics require some staff time, but are generally low effort. The amount of preparation time is managable 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 Extentions
- Nominating your Faculty for Awards and Recognition
- Building Concensus 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 in implemented in such as 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.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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