Advancing and Empowering Women through Institutional Change

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The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

UT System Women’s Senior Leaders Network Symposium
October 12, 2015
UTSA – San Antonio, Texas
UTRGV ADVANCE Program

Five-Year, $3.1 million ADVANCE Institutional Transformation grant, funded by the National Science Foundation.

**Goal:** To increase the representation and advancement of women faculty, particularly Latinas, in STEM academic careers.

**Project PI:** Havidán Rodríguez, Provost/EVPAA;  
**Project Director and Co-PI:** Ala Qubbaj, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs & Diversity
Issues Driving UTRGV ADVANCE

1) Under-representation of women in STEM, particularly Latinas, in tenure-track and senior faculty ranks.

2) Severe under-representation of women in STEM, particularly Latinas, in leadership positions at the department chair level and higher.

3) Lack of family friendly policies/practices, work-life support, and awareness of gender equity and diversity issues.
Major ADVANCE Initiatives & Components

1. Recruitment
2. Advancement
3. Policy and Climate Change
4. Education and Empowerment
5. Social Science Study
Education and Empowerment

Objective: Promote campus awareness and workplace diversity and **empower faculty and administrators to address gender equity barriers**, with a special focus on empowering women faculty through networking, mentoring, and active engagement.
Mission: To empower women faculty by advocating for opportunities to advance their professional development in research, teaching, and service, while balancing their personal, career, physical, and mental health demands.
WFN Major Activities and Impacts

• Highly engaged meetings, workshops & events
• Frequent listserv communication
• Representation on key Academic Affairs teams
• Scheduled meetings between WFN Executive Team and the Provost
• Meetings with women job candidates
• Standing committees
  - Ethics
  - Tenure/Promotion/Annual Review Issues
  - Mentoring, Outreach, and Membership
  - Achievement and Advancement
  - Wellness
  - Women of Color
# WFN Participation among T/TT Women: 2014-15 (UTPA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status and Field</th>
<th>Women Faculty</th>
<th>Latina Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All T/TT at UTPA</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenured</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure-Track</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All T/TT STEM/SBE</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All T/TT Non-STEM</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>38%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Feedback

- Thank you for such an excellent meeting. It was very affirming and exciting to see the presence of such a group and I look forward to future meetings.

- Thank you so much for these updates. It is the only way most faculty members know what is going on.

- Visiting with WFN members during the interview was critical for my decision to come to UTPA... The conversation was very informative and warm and inviting... It was (is) appealing that the institution is working towards equity and there will be resources that I can draw on for professional development, funds, and other aspects of support. This was one of the best parts of my interview.
**Additional Education & Empowerment Activities**

- **Implicit Bias Training** for Search and Tenure/Promotion Committees
- **Train-the-Trainers Workshop**
- **Workshops/Seminars**
- **Meetings with Key University Administrators**

**Professional Development**
- *Grant Writing Panels*
- *Teaching Workshops*
Moving Forward

- ADVANCE and the WFN will continue to be a catalyst in transforming and integrating the legacy institutions into UTRGV.

Thank you for connecting us to the network. I personally enjoy the opportunity to get to know you and WFN. I especially like the idea of seeing challenges as problem solving exercises in the making of UTRGV.
Lessons Learned

• Design such programs based on the institutional context, culture, and specific needs *(There is no cookie-cutter model)*

• **Involve campus stakeholders** (including men) from the inception of the grant

• Buy-in from the upper administration is **key**

• Have **male advocates** within the institution

• **Integrate** ADVANCE initiatives and activities into existing programs for stronger impact and long-term sustainability
Lessons Learned – Continued.

• **Recruit diverse faculty** through gender/ethnic-specific advertising venues, conferences, and professional networks (e.g., SACNAS, Women in Higher Education)

• **Dual Career support** is a strong recruitment and retention tool

• **Communicate frequently** the initiatives and accomplishments of the program to all stakeholders

• External and internal **networking** is key!

• **Collaborate** with other ADVANCE Programs and Hispanic-Serving Institutions
Thank you!

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**Objective:** Enhance faculty and leadership development opportunities.

ADVANCE Leadership Institute
ADVANCE Administrative Fellows
ADVANCE Summer Writing Retreat
Associate to Full Program
Mentoring Programs
Graduate Research Assistance Grants
Workshops and Seminars

UTRGV Women Leadership Representation

2012: 32%  
2015: 36%