Paper ID #5965

Engaging Male Faculty in Institutional Transformation

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Since its inception in 2001, 50 institutions across the country have received a National Science Foundation (NSF) ADVANCE Institutional Transformational Award. The goal of the NSF ADVANCE program is to increase participation of women in academic science and engineering careers. The ADVANCE FORWARD project, funded by NSF in 2008, seeks to develop and implement a comprehensive research-driven strategy to increase participation of women in all faculty and academic administrative positions across our institution. Thus, because NSF funding is limited to science and engineering disciplines, funds are provided by our institution to support ADVANCE FORWARD project activities for faculty who are in non-STEM disciplines. ADVANCE FORWARD's approach to institutional transformation involves multiple interventions which take into account (1) the effects of institutional policies and practices; (2) campus climate, reflecting attitudes and behaviors that diminish women's advancement; and (3) knowledge and skills for success in teaching, research, and leadership. Because men are recognized as vital partners in achieving institutional transformation for gender equity, the ADVANCE FORWARD project deliberately cultivates alliances with men faculty and administrators.

The Campus Climate component of the project focuses upon the institutional and individual responsibilities for working toward a gender diverse faculty and a supportive, inclusive, collegial environment, and tying institutional rewards to success in these areas. A unique initiative within the Campus Climate component is the Advocates and Allies program, designed to intentionally involve faculty men in institutional change to transform departmental cultures and practices. Advocates are charged with recruiting and training other faculty men as allies, and increasing their own knowledge of topics such as unconscious bias and male privilege by reading and discussing relevant literature. On issues of gender equity, we have found that faculty men are more open to critique if they hear it from respected male colleagues; participants in the FORWARD Advocates/Allies program have been instrumental in gaining campus wide support for policy changes that impact faculty women.

The ADVANCE FORWARD project has, over the past four and a half years, worked to improve the climate across campus, enhance recruitment efforts, increase retention and advancement, and open leadership opportunities for faculty women especially in STEM disciplines. In this paper, we discuss our strategies for effectively engaging male faculty in institutional transformation, leading to increased participation of women in all academic faculty ranks and administrative positions.

Institutional context

Our institution is a land grant university in the upper Great Plains with around 692 ranked faculty and instructors in seven academic colleges, serving approximately 14,500 undergraduate and graduate students. The undergraduate student population is 42.6% women (2011 data). Nine undergraduate programs in engineering are offered and approximately 10% of the degrees are awarded to female students. Prior to NSF funding, between 2002 and 2007, the percentage of tenured women faculty had risen from 4.5% to 9.8% – an increase partially

attributable to the self-initiated FORWARD committee. Still, this percentage of tenured women placed our institution the one of the lowest in AAUP's 2006 Faculty Gender Equity Indicators study.¹

Previous status of women faculty in our institution

The AAUP Gender Equity Indicators Report authored by West and Curtis, ¹ combined data gathered since 1975 including data from AAUP studies, and data from the U.S. Dept Education (included 1,445 institutions). The report asserted that, although substantial increases had occurred in national averages for full-time women faculty during those decades (from 22% in the mid-seventies to 39% in 2006), analyses of trends in hiring and retention suggested that gender parity was "unlikely to emerge without significant changes in employment patterns." At that time, West and Curtis reported that 9.8% of tenured faculty positions at our university were held by women and 90.2% by men, with 6.7% of full professorships held by women and 93.3% held by men (p.31).

The ADVANCE FORWARD project was developed in effort to respond to several years of research findings at our institution which had highlighted and documented the obvious scarcity of women in academic administrative roles and revealed a "chilly" workplace climate for women faculty. In 2002, when a group of women and men faculty and administrators came together to prepare a proposal for the NSF ADVANCE Institutional Transformation (IT) program, representation of women faculty in engineering was limited to two newly hired assistant professors. In six years, the number of women faculty in engineering increased to nine (two full professors, two associate professors, and five assistant professors). In fact, several engineering departments (mechanical engineering, industrial and manufacturing, agricultural and biosystems) now have a higher percentage of women faculty than the national average. This increase correlates with FORWARD's work leading to NSF funding, institutional efforts going back to late nineties, and the funding from the NSF ADVANCE program.

Current status of women faculty in our institution

Indeed, as a result of these efforts, transformational change is being accomplished at our institution. There are more women in administrative positions and more women full professors (50% increase), due in part to specific programming that targets promotion from associate professor to professor. In the academic year 2010-2011women represented 19.9% of total STEM faculty in tenured or tenure track positions. New or revised policies have: changed promotion and tenure procedures (tenure extension); required announcements of opportunities for administrative appointments; addressed challenges in students' evaluations of instruction; supported on-campus childcare; emphasized spousal/partner hiring; and created the option for modified duties.

As a result of search committee training that addresses best practices and unconscious bias, members of faculty search committees have increased awareness of search pitfalls and improved skills for successfully completing their work. Substantial funding has been devoted to research support for women faculty (large research grants; course buyouts; travel grants; leadership/development grants; laboratory remodeling). In addition to these efforts and

accomplishments, the project has directed outreach efforts toward developing and enhancing relationships with our Native American tribal partners and, most recently, has initiated a focus on women with disabilities.

Theoretical and empirical frameworks for men as gender equity allies

In a recent essay reflecting on 30 years of theorizing and researching gendered substructures enacted in organizations, Joan Aker² asserts that "a number of issues about how to think about gender inequalities remain unresolved" (p.214). Research over the past several decades has provided clearer understandings about many factors influencing women to enter and/or remain in academia such as departmental and institutional workplace climate, organizational structures, salary equity, and access to resources. However, Acker continues, "white men are still clearly the dominant category in the top positions in almost all organizations" and, though affirmative action practices in hiring and promotion may have made some initial progress, "inequality regimes continue to be relatively resistant."²

Because many efforts to address gender equity are fundamentally structural in nature they generally do not address the day-to-day lived experiences of individuals within institutions. It is increasingly being recognized that such top-down structural adjustment approaches are necessary though insufficient to the multifaceted task of institutional transformation. Stubborn social problems such as gendered inequities require more complex and adaptive solutions.^{3,4} Institutional practices which support dynamic bottom-up approaches, in which individuals with social power are seen as important change agents, have potential to meet this shortfall. One such approach is the intentional cultivation of social justice allies.

Broadly speaking, social justice allies may be defined as "members of dominant social groups (e.g., men, Whites, heterosexuals) who are working to end the system of oppression that gives them greater privilege and power based on their social-group membership." Relatively recently, the realization that workplace inequalities negatively impact financial bottom lines as well as organizational effectiveness has resulted in attention to gender equity ally behaviors/practices in US corporate and non-profit business venues. Research regarding undergraduate college-age men's understanding and support for gender equity has a somewhat longer history and the proliferation of online gender equity advocacy organizations oriented to men testifies to a expansion of interest in men as gender justice allies (see for example, *Men Advocating Real Change* (MARC; http://onthemarc.org/home).

Prime and Moss-Racusin⁷ identified several key forces that can undermine men's engagement as gender equity allies – central among them were fear, apathy, and lack of knowledge about gender inequities. Simply raising awareness of the existence and impacts of gender bias may be crucial in dislodging apathy; helping men extricate themselves from fears that deter them from acting in support of gender justice is a more complex matter. Fundamental fears include concern about a loss of status, apprehension about mistakenly acting offensively, and inhibitions due to anxiety regarding other men's disapproval.⁷ Moreover, various institutional positionalities and heterosexism, as well as racialized, disabled, and classed identities intersect to create differential and often "paradoxical" experiences of social

power. 9-11 In efforts for institutional transformation for gender equity, these unique implications for men working as gender justice allies warrant explicit consideration. 9-11, 15

Knowledge of general principles of allyship provides a foundation for appreciating how male faculty gender equity advocacy programs can function in educational institutions. Theory and research indicate that there are key stages in the development of an ally identity and the enactment of effective ally behaviors. Overall, there appears to be accord among scholars such that 1) potential allies must first understand unearned advantage and how it works in their own lives as well as how it impacts the lives of systemically disadvantaged persons; 2) successful ally development approaches educate, inspire, and support members of the dominant group; and 3) allies need opportunities to explore and practice ally behaviors and to hold themselves accountable to (i.e., obtain guidance and feedback from) non-dominant group members. These components are interdependent; together they support the development of ally identities.

Reason and Davis assert the importance of allies first comprehending the facts and implications of unearned advantage in their own lives while simultaneously understanding implications for systemically disadvantaged persons; when coupled with a conviction regarding distributed and procedural justice this deepened awareness prepares allies to test and refine important ally attitudes and behaviors.²² In support of this view, Prime and Moss-Racusin⁷ found that awareness of gender bias, when combined with a "strong sense of fair play," was predictive of men who were identified as gender equity "champions" by their colleagues (p. 11). Being an ally requires a commitment to rigorous critical inquiry, self-reflection, and perspective taking and other complex skills which require "both cognitive and emotional effort.²² Allies may benefit substantially by participating in ongoing supportive education and networking opportunities; such participation may even be essential to acquiring effective ally skills.

Central to education for gender justice is the need to address the implications of hegemonic masculinity, that is, the ways that social institutions (e.g., families, schools, and media) construct and dictate the observance of masculinist ideologies. Gender equity ally programs that fail to address the "complex intersections of men's privilege, men's adherence to restricted gender role scripts, and... men's contradictory experiences of power" may fall "on deaf ears with men." Gender equity ally programs need to recognize and address the "power paradoxes" experienced by men.

While much of the academic research regarding the development of gender justice allyship in men has been undertaken with college students ^{9, 11, 24} and/or within male violence-prevention programs ^{25, 26}, the core constructs of allyship may apply across multiple domains of difference. Indeed, in each of the edited volumes referenced here, allyship is explored across multiple intersectionalities including disability and racialized identities, and queer masculinities. The ADVANCE FORWARD project intentionally leverages this theoretical and empirical knowledge base regarding the roles that systemically advantaged groups and individuals can play in institutional transformation.

Engaging our male colleagues

Several components and initiatives within the ADVANCE FORWARD project intentionally engage male faculty and administrators in institutional transformation for gender equity. For example, men are recruited as members of the Commission on the Status of Women Faculty, also developed as part of the NSF award to focus on policy change. Climate and Gender Equity research and mid-career mentoring grants, funded by the ADVANCE FORWARD project, are open to men. By both design and default, men are included in Gender and Climate workshops and trainings specifically tailored to faculty and/or to administrators. Pedagogical Lectures, Promotion to Professor Panels, New Faculty Orientations, and Provost's Chair Forums offer ongoing professional development opportunities. Systematic data collection and analysis - and formal reporting of that data - maintains awareness and attention toward the institution's gender equity concerns addressed by the ADVANCE FORWARD project.

A unique element of the ADVANCE FORWARD project, and central to the recruitment of, and ongoing support for, male partners to our initiatives, is the Advocates/Allies program. The approaches taken by the FORWARD Advocates/Allies program are well-grounded in the literature cited above and are based on the knowledge that in traditionally male dominated disciplines, including STEM and in male dominated institutions, men are critical partners in achieving institutional transformation. Moreover, the FORWARD Advocates/Allies program directly addresses the unique concerns of academic faculty and administrative men grappling with the complexities of hegemonic masculinity. With these dynamics in mind, the ADVANCE FORWARD project created the Advocates/Allies program, designed to develop a critical mass of faculty men who can serve as advocates and allies for and with their female colleagues. The mission of the FORWARD Advocates/Allies program is to:

- educate male faculty about our goals for institutional transformation,
- introduce men to skills and strategies for bringing about positive change in their departments and colleges, and
- use that knowledge to build a supportive network of male allies for female faculty.

Advocates and Allies have somewhat different roles in these efforts. The Advocates are faculty men with a record of and strong commitment to supporting faculty women in their department, colleges, and the university. They are expected to be active and effective proponents of gender diversity and equality specifically in terms of increasing the number of female faculty, encouraging the hiring and promotion of female faculty in administrative positions, and ensuring the fair and equitable treatment of women within their units. In addition to meeting regularly, Advocates intentionally develop and enhance their own understanding of gender bias and its impact on the academic careers of women. The Advocates also develop and regularly the administer Ally training. They have added a follow-up component to the initial Ally training with informal meetings to discuss situations that arise in departments and possible ways to address those situations.

The FORWARD Allies are faculty men willing to identify themselves as allies of faculty women; they participate in the Ally trainings and sign an 'Ally Agreement' – a statement formalizing their commitment to gender equity allyship. The objective is to have Allies in every academic unit. They are expected to take action primarily within their departments: speaking up at a meeting, inviting a female colleague to collaborate on research, talking about teaching and observing each other in the classroom, or serving on a committee so their female colleague does not have to. It might also mean making sure that coffee runs, lunches, or after-work social events are open and inclusive. Although any faculty man can become an ally, the focus for participation is on tenure track faculty members who will become tenured in the next five years as a means to develop a pool of Allies from which future Advocates can be selected.

In an effort to evaluate the impact and assess the effectiveness of the Advocates/Allies program at our institution, we have collected both quantitative and qualitative data. From the quantitative data we have learned that the Allies programming is having a positive impact on the male faculty who attend the trainings. In particular, 92.7% of male faculty attending the ally trainings agreed that they would be able to implement new strategies to promote a more equitable climate for women faculty as a result of participating in the ally training (36.4% Strongly Agreed; and 56.4% Agreed).

The majority of the data collected to date on the impact and effectiveness of the Advocate/Allies program have come from qualitative interviews and focus groups of Advocates, Allies, and women faculty. The external evaluator for the ADVANCE FORWARD project, interviewed 15 of the Advocates. The results of those interviews demonstrated the positive impacts that the Advocate program has had on the men as individual faculty members and on the overall campus climate. For example, one Advocate explained the purpose of the Advocate program by stating, "At some level when you say 'I want to educate myself and it's about creating change in myself,' that's good and that's consciousness raising and we're all in favor of that. It's also about going back to your college or your department and intervening in the ways that you can." Another male faculty member described the effect of being an Advocate this way: "I do know that being involved in the [Advocates] group made me do some things differently that I might not have been inclined to. At my core I'm an introvert and I'm not always the most outspoken person, but having been involved as an Advocate and having accepted this as a role that I have to fulfill it, which involves speaking up."

Yet another Advocate described the importance of the program like this: "I think what distinguishes this group is that it's given a name and has regular meeting times. I think it gives it a more formal mechanism to and space within our lives to focus on these issues in a way that we probably wouldn't if we didn't have that, sort of time set aside. So I think there is an added benefit to find time to devote a couple of hours a month doing this." A significant change that one Advocate shared, "It [the Ally trainings] really did make me more aware of a lot of things going on around me." A second Advocate explained, "I know just from being involved with the Allies and Advocates I'm getting a better understanding and a better appreciation for broader climate, which is not terribly easy to define, it's not something that you can point and say, 'This is the problem, this is the problem.'"

In addition to this growing awareness, each of the Advocates who were interviewed identified concrete actions in which they were now engaged as a result of the training. For example, one male faculty administrator shared, "...maybe being an Advocate helped me to realize that I could try to put in as a requirement for a position, something that acknowledged diversity." Advocates also identified positive impacts on the broader campus climate. For example, one Advocate noted, "The emphasis [of the Advocates] has been on getting Allies in departments and getting those men to be more aware of things and being able to speak up and bring issues to the front. It is about climate change." The interviewees also provided specific examples of collective actions they have engaged in as a group to influence the larger climate. One Advocate noted, "One of the things I'd say that the Advocates did is when we have campus wide hires, that we are very conscious of trying to make sure that we are at talks that people give or, if we can't be on the committees, that we ask questions about gender or we listen to what they're saying and try and provide input on that. So we've been pretty deliberate about that in terms of trying to influence those kinds of things."

The Allies who participated in these focus groups also named several ways that the Ally training helped to create positive change within themselves. One Ally shared, "I did the training last year and I found it was helpful, in terms of, getting us to think about various kinds of biases that we ourselves might have, things we've seen, what we might do." Another Ally reflected on the impact the program was having on the larger campus climate, "I mean, the existence of the group, I wonder if that sends a signal all over campus that there now is this formal group [the Ally program] that includes men who are interested in [gender] equity."

Another component of evaluation of the Advocate/Ally program was to conduct two focus groups with women faculty about their impressions of the program. These focus groups were also conducted by the external evaluator, and the participants identified a number of benefits related to the Advocate/Ally program. One woman faculty member explained, "It's nice to know that if I have a problem I can go maybe to this man [an Advocate] who has tenure on campus who might support me if tell him my story. Or that I know that there is going to be a group of men [Advocates and Allies] who are going to be advocating for an issue that is relevant to women specifically on campus." Another woman faculty member shared that one of the benefits of the Ally program is having male colleagues who "recognize something that happened that makes them feel uncomfortable and talk about it with other men and then go back and [address it in the department]. That's exactly the type of thing that should be going on..."

Promoting male gender equity allyship in academic institutions

Theoretical and empirical research indicates that several key elements form the foundation of effective allyship across domains and contexts. Essentially, allies are members of a dominant group and as such, must first become aware of, and come to terms with, their own privilege and the impacts of it on non-dominant group members. Next, allies need to be supported in the often cognitively and psychologically arduous task of unlearning privilege. Finally, allies need multiple and iterative opportunities to test their new knowledge and hone their skills. Extrapolating from the literature and grounded in the context of the work undertaken by the ADVANCE FORWARD project, we find that the development of effective

gender equity allyship by men in our academic institution has been characterized by the practices reflecting the following core elements:

- Brings awareness regarding gender inequities
- Engages men in solution building
- Provides ongoing training, discussions
- Increases empathy and understanding of impacts
- Utilizes male role models
- Provides opportunities for men-only dialogues
- Encourages reverse mentoring
- Acknowledges costs men face
- Intentionally includes male colleagues

Figure 1 (Appendix A) presents a matrix of the key strategies and activities utilized by the ADVANCE FORWARD project cross-referenced with these core elements. Together, these strategies and elements have been vetted through their use in the ADVANCE FORWARD project. The importance of the Advocate/Allies program to the overall success of institutional transformation should not be underestimated. Moreover, we believe that the intentional recruitment of tenured men faculty as well as men in administrative positions has been crucial to our successes. Several studies have documented the importance of department chairs/heads and senior faculty in creating a productive and welcoming departmental climate. Since many institutions continue to be male dominated, men continue to play a key role as advocates and allies for institutional change regarding gender equity and parity.

The FORWARD Advocate/Ally program offers an excellent model for training and supporting men advocates and allies for gender equity in other institutions. Its strategies are designed to bring awareness; engage men in solution-building, provide ongoing training and discussion; increase empathy and understanding of the impacts of gender injustices; provide opportunities for men-only dialogues; encourage reverse mentoring (junior faculty with the opportunity to shed light on their experiences to senior faculty); acknowledge the costs and unique complexities that men allies face; and be inclusive. The uniqueness and the effectiveness of the Advocates/Allies program has already attracted the attention of other institutions, including requests to provide Advocates/Allies program training, invitations from other institutions to share information about the program, and requests to use the materials developed in and for this program. We are confident that our institution will continue to enjoy the fruits of the ADVANCE FORWARD project and we count gender equity allyship by men faculty and administrators as a profoundly central influence.

Acknowledgements

This work is made possible through a National Science Foundation grant# HRD-0811239 to the NDSU ADVANCE FORWARD program.

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Appendix A

Figure 1. Matrix of Key Strategies and Elements in Promoting Male Gender Equity Allyship in Academic Institution.

Strategies Elements	Bring awareness re: gender in-equity	Engage men in solution building	Provide ongoing training	Increase empathy & under-standing of impacts	Utilize male role models	Provide opportunities for men-only dialogues	Encourage reverse mentoring	Acknowledge costs men face	Intention-ally include male colleagues
Advocates /Allies Male Faculty Gender Equity groups	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M
Faculty Advancement Lectures and Panels	Q	Q	Q	Q	Q		Q		Q
Pedagogic Luncheon	M	M	M	М	M				М
New Faculty Orientation	S	S		S	S				S
Provost's Chair Forums	M	M	M	М	M		M		М
Comm. on the Status of Women Faculty	M	M	M	М			M		М
Climate and gender equity research grants	A	A		A					A
Systematic data collection, analysis, and reporting	0			О					О
Gender and Climate Work-shops	F	F	F	F	F		F	F	F

 $Legend: O = Ongoing; \ A = Annually; \ Q = Quarterly; \ S = per \ Semester; \ M = Monthly; \ F = Frequent-once \ or \ more \ per \ semester$