



National Science Foundation  
Division of Human Resource Development

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**FROM:** Amy Rogers, PhD

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**REF:** Texas A&M (HRD-1008385) - First Year Site Visit Report, March 1, 2011

On March 1, 2011, the ADVANCE Program Office conducted the First Year Site Visit at Texas A&M University. The program officer in attendance was: Amy Rogers.

The site visit began at 8AM and ended at approximately 5:00PM. Specific agenda items included a series of meetings as follows:

- Texas A&M ADVANCE Center for Women Faculty- Leadership Team
- Financial Management
- Internal Advisory Board
- Texas A&M ADVANCE Center for Women Faculty-Planning Committee
- Texas A&M ADVANCE Center for Women Faculty- Activity Leaders
- Texas A&M Women STEM Faculty

### **Texas A&M ADVANCE Leadership Team**

In Attendance

- Sherry Yennello, PI
- Chris Kaunas, Program Director
- Linda Stelly, Administrative support staff

The leadership team provided brief overviews of their mission with respect to the overall goals of the Texas A&M ADVANCE project, as well as details on progress to date. The key components of the Texas A&M project include thirteen activities centered in three domains linked to the Psychologically Healthy Workplace (PHW) as established by the American Psychological Association. These include *Climate Change Activities* (i.e., department head workshops, staff development training, student diversity workshops, merit pool incentives,

departmental mini-grants), *Success Enhancement Activities* (i.e., ADVANCE scholar program, rotating administrator program, success circles, and an eminent speaker series), and *Recruitment & Retention Activities* (i.e., workshops for future women faculty, award and search committee training, target-of-opportunity speaker series, and faculty recognition.) In addition two social science studies are planned in each of the PHW domains. The ambitious scope of the planned activities is accompanied by thoughtful organization and well-planned implementation. Each of the PHW domains is co-chaired by two highly-invested individuals, at least one of whom is an administrator. Furthermore, each activity in the three domains has an activity leader who provides direct oversight. It is clear that there is an upward trajectory toward success in most of these areas.

Work on the **Department Head Workshops** has begun with an initial phase of critically evaluating current training for department heads on issues of diversity as well as assembling best practices. Dr. Simon Sheather in collaboration with the Dean of Faculties & Associate Provost, co-PI Dr. Antonio Cepeda-Benito, are leading this initiative. The intention is to alter and supplement current training practices to include material on implicit bias and to help department heads reach University diversity goals which are linked to merit bonuses. Workshops are slated to begin Spring 2011 with the first on *Incivility* by Dr. Darla Twale on April 7, 2011.

The **Staff Development Training** is an innovative aspect of the Texas A&M ADVANCE project that focuses on increasing the awareness of and subsequently reducing bias toward female faculty on the part of staff and shop workers. Again, the intention is to alter and supplement current training practices to include material on bias, gender equity, and diversity. This activity is the focus of one of the social science projects which will assess changes in faculty perception of staff bias longitudinally as the new training is implemented. This research will be led by Dr. Kathi Miner-Rubino. Workshops are slated to begin Spring 2011.

**Student Diversity Workshops** are to be piloted in Fall 2011 and fully implemented in the Summer of 2012. The workshops will be embedded in new-student orientation and consist of interactive theater performances to address stereotypes and biases of students toward female faculty. Negotiations are currently underway with a local theater group. The leader of this activity is Dr. C.J. Woods, Vice President of Student Services. This activity is the focus of one of the social science projects which will conduct content analyses of students' teacher evaluations to assess changes in bias against and stereotyping of female faculty. This social science study is led by co-PI, Dr. Stephanie Payne.

Just prior to the Texas A&M ADVANCE IT submission, policy was established that linked 10% of **Merit Pool Incentives** to progress toward the diversity goals of individual colleges and offices. The policy was to be implemented in the Fall of 2011; however, budget cuts have eliminated all merit pay increases for the 2011-2012 academic year. Nevertheless, the ADVANCE team is poised to leverage this institutional practice, with the committed leadership of Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity, Dr. Christine Stanley.

The **Departmental Mini Grant** activity will award funds to departments based on competitive proposals for projects that support ADVANCE goals. The activity was slated to begin in Spring 2011 and the call for proposals has been issued. Proposals are due the end of March

2011 and several had been received at the time of the site visit. The mini grant competition is being led by Dr. Al Boggess.

The **ADVANCE Scholar Program** is a mentoring program for female STEM faculty who also are members of other underrepresented groups. Initially the exclusive focus was on Women of Color, however, it has been expanded to include women with disabilities and GLBT women. No mentors have been identified yet, but, some potential mentees have been contacted. If no local mentor can be identified, women will be connected with others in the broader STEM community. This activity also includes an annual conference to be held at Texas A&M. The first conference was scheduled for Spring 2011 but will likely be delayed until next year. Dr. Becky Pettit, Vice President for Diversity, is the leader of this activity.

The **Rotating Administrator Program** is a leadership development activity for female STEM faculty. Initially it was proposed that interested women would submit proposals for projects to the appropriate administrative office. The most promising projects would be selected and collaboratively developed. In the first iteration of this activity, which is currently being negotiated and will be launched in July, the administrative office is taking a much stronger role in setting the nature and scope of the project. However, the administrator-in-training is still to lead the project, hold budget authority and attend all administrative meetings. Furthermore, the administrative host office shares financial responsibility with ADVANCE for the projects. Dr. José Luis Bermúdez, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts is the activity leader and the head administrator in the first host office. This activity is the focus of one of the social science projects which will involve case studies of female STEM professors participating in the rotating administrator program. The social science study is led by Dr. Mindy Bergman.

**Success Circles** are mentoring networks encouraged by the ADVANCE Center for Women Faculty at Texas A&M. The networks are intended to be organic in that they do not necessarily center on academic discipline or career stage but on mutual interests and shared activities. The goal is to increase satisfaction and well being. ADVANCE program staff will facilitate the creation of these mentoring networks through topical workshops and advertising of local events. Three activities have been completed at the writing of this report including seminars on *Teaching with Technology*, and *Negotiating for What you Want* and several Texas A&M teams participating in *Walk Across Texas*. The activity leader for the success circles is Dr. Jane Welsh. This activity is the focus of one of the social science projects which will compare the satisfaction of STEM women assistant professors who engage in these success circles to those who engage in traditional mentoring. The social science study is led by co-PI, Dr. Stephanie Payne.

In the **Eminent Speaker Series** one or two senior women scientists are to be brought in annually to speak about gender and diversity. These speakers then will meet with smaller groups of administrators and faculty for discussion. The series is slated to begin in the Fall of 2011 and is led by Dr. Nancy Amato.

**Workshops for Future Women Faculty** are slated to begin in the Fall of 2011 to be well timed with the start of new hires and the recruitment season for the following year's hires. The workshops also will include post-docs who may be interested in academic careers. Topics will be designed to empower and educate new and prospective hires at Texas A&M as well as STEM women in general. Departments will be encouraged to nominate women for

attendance who they are interested in hiring, especially women from underrepresented groups. This activity is the focus of one of the social science projects which will compare the well being of post-docs who attend the conference to those who do not. This research will be led by Dr. Kathi Miner-Rubino.

**Award and Search Committee Training** enhances traditional search committee guidance by adding training for committees which select individuals for university/college awards and tenure and promotion committees. Adjustments to current instruction programs will be made that incorporate the most current research on gender bias. Training is slated to begin in the Spring of 2011 and is led by Dr. Mike Pishko. A first workshop event with committee training on *Incivility* by Dr. Darla Twale is scheduled for April 7, 2011. This activity is the focus of one of the social science projects which will involve comparisons of committees that have not yet completed training to those which have in areas surrounding equity. This social science study is led by Dr. Mindy Bergman.

The **Target-of Opportunity Speaker Series** will bring in select senior women STEM faculty to give presentations with the explicit goal of recruiting them for hire. This activity is led by Dr. Jennifer Welch and expected to begin Spring 2011.

The **Faculty Recognition** activity will involve collaboration with other units responsible for “public affairs” activities to organize events and publicize the achievements of women faculty. This activity is led by Dr. Elena Castell-Perez and is expected to begin Spring 2011.

## **Recommendations**

The expansion of the ADVANCE Scholar program to include other “double-minority” groups (i.e., women with disabilities, lesbians) is interesting and allowed. Care should be taken to ensure that resources approved for the mentoring of Women of Color are not spread so thin as to render the program ineffective. Furthermore, the logistics and feasibility of the planned conference centering on “double-minority” women need to be carefully considered. It is recommended that targeted groups be surveyed about their interest in a joint conference. Please note that the inclusion of these additional groups as targets of intervention necessitates documentation of the progress of these groups on the toolkit indicators.

The value of the Success Circles will likely depend on the durability of connections made through the different activities. The Texas A&M team is encouraged to think carefully about how to help these one-time events lead to lasting relationships.

## **Financial Management Team Meeting**

In Attendance

- Sherry Yennello, PI
- Chris Kaunas, Program Director
- Linda Stelly, Administrative support staff
- Pam Allen, Senior Project Administrator, Research Services
- Jana Lawrence, Senior Proposal Administrator, Research Services
- Mary Ellen Maeker, Business Coordinator, Dean of Sciences

The NSF Program Office reviewed policies related to the disallowability of rebudgeting participant costs without prior program officer approval and with the disallowability of changing the time and effort of the PI.

The tracking of project expenditures by Research Services and by project leadership is adequate. There is open communication between project leadership and the Research Services team. PIs have access to the University accounting system and changes are made in real time. In addition, monthly budget reports are generated by Research Services.

### **Recommendation:**

One issue was raised by grants management specialists concerning the purchase of ADVANCE office furniture. After consultation with the NSF Division of Grants and Agreements, it is determined that the PIs are able to make this type of purchase as long as they act within the current policies and procedures of Texas A&M. The institution should note that no additional monies will be added to the total award amount such that these expenditures will come from the current budget.

### **Internal Advisory Board (IAB) Meeting**

In Attendance

- Sherry Yennello, PI
- Chris Kaunas, Program Director
- Linda Stelly, Administrative support staff
- N. K. Anand, Representative for Dean of the School of Engineering
- José Luis Bermúdez, Dean of Liberal Arts
- Antonio Cepeda-Benito, Dean of Faculties, Associate Provost, and co-PI
- Alan Sams, Representative for Dean of College of Agriculture & Life Sciences
- Kate Miller, Dean Geosciences
- Joe Newton, Dean College of Science
- Christine Stanley, VP & Associate Provost for Diversity
- Karan Watson, Provost & Executive VP for Academic Affairs, IAB Chair, and co-PI
- Joe Weber, VP for Student Affairs

The Internal Advisory Board (IAB) is composed of many highly placed administrators including the Chairperson of the IAB, Dr. Karan Watson, Provost & Executive VP for Academic Affairs; Dr. Christine Stanley, VP & Associate Provost for Diversity; General Joe Weber (ret), VP for Student Affairs; and Dr. Antonio Cepeda-Benito, Dean of Faculties and Associate Provost. Both Drs. Watson and Cepeda-Benito are co-PIs. The membership of the IAB was chosen because they head offices and departments which, in partnership with ADVANCE, will launch initiatives and ultimately be responsible for sustainability.

It is noted that Texas A&M had several policies and practices already in place at the time of ADVANCE application development. These included, but were not limited to diversity training for chairs of search committees, availability of dual career bridging funds, regularly scheduled

climate surveys, efforts of the Center for Teaching Excellence and Women's Faculty Network, mentoring programs, development series on advancement and balance issues, new Department Head orientation, parental and caregiver tenure clock extension, course release for new parents, lactation stations, and required trainings in sexual harassment and EEO for all. The IAB recognized the outstanding opportunity presented by ADVANCE to systematically study and improve existing efforts as well as investigate new ADVANCE initiatives to identify those which work best at Texas A&M.

It was clear from this meeting that the IAB membership was well informed about ADVANCE, enthusiastic about ADVANCE goals, and aware how ADVANCE could help Texas A&M address various needs in areas within their individual purviews. Texas A&M is commended for assembling such a committed and august group. The IAB emphasized the need for efforts to help retain STEM women at the Associate and Full levels, the need to increase the representation of STEM women in leadership, the need for attitude/behavior change across all campus stakeholder groups (e.g., students, staff, administrators), and the need for greater numbers of STEM women faculty overall. The funded ADVANCE initiatives are very well aligned with the needs identified by the IAB thus increasing the chance of both short-term success and long-term sustainability.

### **Recommendations**

Although wide-spread hiring is not expected due to budget constraints, Texas A&M is planning a significant number of "whitepaper" hires of prestigious senior-level individuals as well as filling vacancies as a result of the retirement of high-level administrators in the College of Engineering. These hiring opportunities represent a way to manifest quick change. The administration is encouraged to ensure that those considered for these hires, as well as for any opportunity hires, reflect diversity.

### **ADVANCE Planning Committee Meeting & Activity Leaders Meeting**

#### In Attendance

- Sherry Yennello, PI
- Chris Kaunas, Program Director
- Linda Stelly, Administrative support staff
- Robin Autenrieth, Co-Chair Recruitment and Retention, co-PI
- Al Boggess, Chair Mathematics, Departmental Mini Grants Lead
- Sarah Bednarz, Co-Chair Recruitment and Retention
- Mindy Bergman, Social Science Research Team
- Elena Castell-Perez, Lead Faculty Recognition
- Jeff Froyd, Internal Evaluation Team
- Merena Jacobsen, Director, Women's Resource Center, Staff Development Training
- Becky Petitt, Assistant VP for Diversity- ADVANCE Scholar Program
- Stephanie Payne, Social Science Research Team, co-PI
- Mary Jo Richardson, Co-Chair Climate Change
- Dorothy Shippen, Co-Chair, Success Enhancement
- Jorja Kimball, Director, Strategic Research Development

- Nancy Amato, Lead Eminent Speaker Series

The Planning Committee is composed of the co-Chairs of each of the three domain areas targeted by ADVANCE, the social science research team, and the internal evaluation team. The Planning Committee members meet weekly. The overlap of this group with the activity leaders group is high and the two meetings will be discussed together. This group expressed satisfaction with their working relationships and commitment to their respective areas of responsibility. They acknowledged that much of their effort involved improving programs that were already in place and saw this as an advantage in avoiding resistance from stakeholders. Some concern was expressed about potential backlash from non-STEM departments. The evaluators and social scientists felt that the domain Chairs and PIs mostly were receptive to their concerns and needs. There was some concern expressed about evaluating longer-term impacts of the Texas A&M ADVANCE initiatives.

### **Recommendations**

The Texas A&M ADVANCE program has developed an elegant organizational structure that should greatly facilitate the high level execution of the activities. The Director and Deputy Director are encouraged to take full advantage of the broad support and participation of so many campus stakeholders. Broad ownership and shared responsibility both contribute to institutional transformation.

While there is a connection made between the activities and the Psychologically Healthy Workplace (PHW) as established by the American Psychological Association, some of the activities are less well connected to the theoretical framework than others. It is strongly encouraged that this theoretical foundation remains central to the specific choices made concerning activities, the implementation of activities, and to the evaluation and social science research.

Backlash from non-STEM departments is a common concern of ADVANCE IT institutions. Although it is noted that we are in especially challenging financial times, every effort should be exhausted to find funding to include all departments, especially in high-profile activities.

### **Texas A&M Women STEM Faculty**

In Attendance

- Sherry Yennello, PI
- Chris Kaunas, Program Director
- Linda Stelly, Administrative support staff
- Louise Abbott, Assoc Prof, Veterinary Integrative Biosciences
- Ginger Carney, Assoc Prof, Biology
- Sharon Gursky, Assoc Prof, Anthropology
- Mary Beth Hueste, Assoc Prof, Civil Engineering

Four women faculty, representing different academic disciplines were in attendance at this meeting. A wide array of issues were discussed that were relevant to career development and career progression. Major issues related to getting stuck at the Associate level, some toxic departmental climates, student disrespect, and a general lack of encouragement of women compared to men were identified as priorities for this group.

**Recommendation:** None.

### **Final Meeting with Texas A&M ADVANCE Leadership Team**

In Attendance

- Sherry Yennello, PI
- Chris Kaunas, Program Director
- Linda Stelly, Administrative support staff

A final meeting with the ADVANCE leadership team was conducted. Several key issues that the PI and Co-PIs are encouraged to consider are highlighted above in this report. Additionally, the Texas A&M ADVANCE project is encouraged to execute due diligence in focusing on the following:

- **Psychologically Healthy Workplace.** It is noted that the broad overarching theme of this project is a psychologically healthy workplace, particularly for women faculty. To that end, it is necessary to ensure that there are direct and recognizable links between all activities, the overarching theme, and the evaluation and social science efforts.
- **New Policy Development and Implementation.** It is noted that the activities associated with this project center around climate change, success enhancement, and recruitment/retention. Furthermore, a path to sustainability has been planned by the ADVANCE team and is clearly supported by the individuals on the IAB. This foresight bodes well for the sustainability of ADVANCE initiatives and sustainability should remain central to the project in the coming years. In addition to the current plans, careful attention and diligent effort should be given to the implementation of policies and to firm accountability mechanisms surrounding these policies. The Texas A&M ADVANCE leadership, with oversight from the IAB, is strongly encouraged to develop a schedule of potential policies and accountability mechanisms to ensure that the policies that are developed as a result of this project, as well as those already in place, are implemented uniformly across the STEM departments.
- **Evaluation and Social Science Baselines.** The number of activities and the proposed pace of implementation are ambitious. It is recommended that preliminary work related to evaluation and social science baselines are well thought out and thoroughly carried out prior to the implementation of the activities they will assess/study. Special attention needs to be given to baselines for longer-term measures of success. This planning should be made with the input of the external



evaluator. The presence of good baseline data provides opportunities to delineate connections between activities and both theory and outcomes that will be needed to make definitive assessment regarding the impact of ADVANCE at Texas A&M. The roll out of activities need not be rushed to meet a schedule at the expense of evaluation and the social science.

Responses to the above mentioned recommendations must be adequately addressed in the annual report. The PI is invited to submit a response to the First Year Site Visit Report within 90 days of receipt of this report. The PI response can be submitted within the interim progress report or under separate cover as appropriate.