Advancing Women Faculty of Color by Fostering a Culture of Mentoring: An Assessment of the ADVANCE Scholar Program
Christine Stanley, Jyotsna Vaid, and Sherry Yennello

Abstract

Women faculty of color are disproportionately under-represented in research-intensive universities, particularly at tenured ranks. Research shows that they face heightened scrutiny and challenges to their legitimacy as scholars, teachers, and professionals. As a result, many women faculty of color report feeling isolated, devalued, or out of the loop. The ADVANCE Scholar Program was developed to address these challenges through a unique mentoring program. Led by the ADVANCE Scholar Committee, consisting of a group of senior faculty from various fields at Texas A&M, many of them women of color themselves, the program aims at improving the retention and professional advancement of women faculty of color. Each year, a cohort of 5 to 20 women faculty of color from across the university is selected to participate in the Scholar Program. Each Scholar is assigned an Eminent Scholar of their choosing in their field, who serves as an external mentor, and a senior faculty member at Texas A&M, who serves as an Internal Advocate. The Internal Advocates act as a sounding board and a resource for Scholars as they learn to navigate the culture of their department and the university; the Eminent Scholars in turn serve to open doors for the Scholars and help them to articulate and pursue their professional goals and achieve greater visibility. We summarize a recent assessment of this program.