

The Mid-Career Mentoring Program at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte

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The ADVANCE Program at UNC Charlotte

- Funded as a third-round institution in 2006
- Broad range of initiatives focused on
 - Recruitment, retention, and advancement of women in STEM
 - Improving the institutional climate for equity, inclusion and support
 - Creating more transparent, inclusive, and equitable institutional policies and procedures



Mid-Career Needs Assessment

- Focus Groups for Women in STEM
 - Identified barriers to promotion
 - Barriers: Lack of clarity and transparency in promotion criteria; lack of performance feedback and mentoring from chairs; disproportionate service demands; gender bias; bias related to rank
 - Identified needs of mid-career faculty
 - Support for research; information/guidance on promotion criteria; regular performance feedback; informal networking with peers; and access to formal mentoring

Mid-Career Needs Assessment

- Survey of all Associate Professor Faculty (N=283)
 - Completed surveys returned by 44 women and 52 men
- Survey Findings
 - Widespread perception that the criteria for promotion are not clear - for both genders but more pronounced for women
 - Fewer than one third of men and women reported receiving guidance on promotion from their chairs
 - A majority indicated they were not “intentional” about their career planning toward full - for both genders but more pronounced for women
 - A large majority of men and women indicated that having a mentor would be helpful in preparing for promotion

Mid-Career Mentoring Program

- Goal-
 - to provide information, development, and support that will facilitate the advancement of faculty from the rank of Associate to the rank of Full Professor
- Target-
 - all Associate Professor faculty, with some initiatives limited to female STEM faculty
- Approach-
 - a range of initiatives all focused on intentional career planning and support



Mid-Career Planning Process

- Step 1 Articulate your Career Goals
- Step 2 Seek understanding of the Promotion Criteria
in your Department/unit and College
» Faculty Forum
- Step 3 Conduct a Self-Assessment
- Step 4 Write a Mid-Career Development Plan
- Step 5 Discuss Plan with Mentor and Chair
- Step 6 Implement the Plan
- Planning Process has become cornerstone for three Mid-Career Mentoring Initiatives

Mid-Career Mentoring Initiative 1

- Vertical-dyad mentoring-
 - Pilot program in College of Liberal Arts and Sciences - Chemistry, Physics, Psychology – only women Associate Professors invited
 - Associates matched with Full Professors for ongoing career development and mentoring
 - Mentors chosen by faculty and training provided by ADVANCE and CLAS Dean

Mid-Career Mentoring Initiative 2

- Informal Horizontal Group Mentoring-
 - Monthly informal mentoring open to all Associates
 - Facilitated by ADVANCE with topics related to stages/challenges in the Mid-Career Planning Process
 - No commitment to on-going participation or to completion of Mid-Career Plan required
 - Drop-ins encouraged and un-scheduled topics can be added by participants

Mid-Career Mentoring Initiative 3

- Formal Horizontal Group Mentoring
 - Pilot program in Engineering- all Associates invited
 - Peer mentoring of Associates to Associates
 - Initial training with Mid-Career Planning Process provided by ADVANCE; Subsequent monthly meetings facilitated by faculty volunteer “convener”
 - Commitment to ongoing participation and to completion of Mid-Career Plan required

Anecdotal Results of Program Impact

- Vertical Dyad Mentoring-
 - Participation - 7 of 8 eligible faculty
 - Three anticipate going up within next 2-3 years; one says program helped her decide on early retirement
 - All but one satisfied with mentoring relationship
- Informal Horizontal Group Mentoring-
 - Average 10 participants monthly from all Colleges
 - Small core group of “regular” attendees who provide informal peer mentoring to each other
- Formal Horizontal Group Mentoring-
 - Participation - 11 of 38 eligible faculty

Early Impact and Future Evaluation

- Successful Promotion to Full
 - 6/16 of Associates promoted to Full since program began (2 academic years) have participated in one or more of the ADVANCE initiatives
 - 5/6 female promotions to Full since program began have participated in one or more of the ADVANCE initiatives (All are in STEM units)
 - Overwhelming positive response to Faculty Forums
- Re-administer Associate Faculty Survey in Fall 2010 for statistical comparisons and formative feedback

