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

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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