

LEAP



Leadership Education for Advancement and Promotion

About the LEAP Project

By Patricia Rankin

The Leadership Education for Advancement and Promotion (LEAP) project is a five-year campus wide initiative funded by the National Science foundation (NSF) with matching support from the University. The LEAP project has many components that are designed to be synergistic in transforming the campus climate. While the LEAP project's ultimate goal is to increase the number of women in leadership positions in the sciences and engineering disciplines, we believe that the best way to do this is to make this institution one where all faculty members feel supported in doing their best work and which offers opportunities to all to excel. As a result, LEAP workshops are open to all tenure track faculty – independent of gender or field.

We run several short workshops during the semester as well as longer four-day long workshops over the Christmas break and during the summer. The longer workshops cover basic skills such as career planning, understanding your style, negotiation, and conflict resolution as well as providing



Advanced Leadership Workshop, June 2004

overviews of the campus culture. The workshop content is evolving over time to focus specifically on the strategies needed to succeed in the academic environment. We learned early on that it was more important to cover time management than stress management because if faculty could manage their time they could manage their stress! The workshops frequently involve members of the higher administration such as Susan Kent, the associate vice chancellor for academic affairs, and our Provost Phil Distefano who give their perspectives on important issues affecting the campus or individual faculty members. The workshops provide an effective way of getting to know colleagues in other disciplines across campus and often help faculty members build networks within the campus.

Other important components of the LEAP are the research studies being conducted under its umbrella. These studies range from primarily quantitative studies (for example, of salary equity) to more qualitative, ethnographic

investigations of how and why people make career choices. Recently LEAP conducted a climate study (thank you to those of you who participated). This climate study will be repeated at the end of the project to help us determine LEAP's effects. We are already discovering interesting findings in the data. An example is a major driver of salary discrepancies between male and female faculty and how it relates to the discipline – fields with the highest percentage of women tend to also be those that are least well paid. Future newsletters will report on the climate study in more detail.

The LEAP group wants to ensure that the program produces long term, permanent change. We are working both at the individual level through our workshops and at the institutional level. We would like to hear from you if you have suggestions for policy changes that would help make the campus a better place to work. We are already studying the impact of changing population demographics on the make-up of the faculty and the

C O N T E N T S

About the LEAP Project	1
Fitting In or Opting Out	2
LEAP Workshops	3
Research Documents	
Pay Gaps	4

Fitting In or Opting Out

By Sherie McClam

In August 2002, I set out to contribute to our understanding of how female graduate students and faculty come to feel excluded from or marginalized by careers in academic science. I suspected feelings of exclusion and marginalization developed as doctoral students and faculty learned what it means to be an academic scientist. I believed this learning was strongly influenced by their interactions with artifacts like scientific journals, grant applications, student evaluations, and all of the documentation required for getting tenure or a tenure track faculty position. As a result, I proposed to do a dissertation research project in which I would talk with male and female graduate students and junior professors about what they were learning about academic science from these artifacts that I called "inscriptions."

In general, I found that my co-participants learned a lot from inscriptions about what it means to be an academic scientist. Sylvia—an ecology doctoral student—had gotten the impression that writing about your research in popular media is an "unscientific" thing to do. Aaron—a biology doctoral student—had learned that publishing papers is the best way to establish the quality of your research. And Peter—a chemistry assistant professor—understood organic chemistry to be a field where being "first" is more important than anything else.

Most importantly, I found that based on the ways in which they interpreted inscriptions, my co-participants were making judgments about how well they did or didn't "fit" in the world of academic science. For example I learned that Amanda—a female chemistry doctoral student—had made the determination that she wasn't cut out to be a chemistry professor, in large part, because of the way she interpreted articles written for scientific journals. The science that Amanda experienced as a doctoral student was messy, filled with mistakes, dead ends, and uncertainty about findings and their



meaning. In contrast, the science she was reading about in academic journals was neat and clean, following a linear progression from hypothesis to certain conclusion. This contrast led Amanda to question her own capabilities as a scientist.

For all of my co-participants, inscriptions defined rules for being an academic scientist that were quite narrow. For example, inscriptions told Sylvia that hypothesis driven research is more "scientific" than observational or descriptive research. Inscriptions told Peter that if he didn't get a grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) he would never get tenure. And they told Greta that doing smaller research projects with short turnaround times would be better for building her reputation than doing larger, more natural history related projects.

When I compared my conversations with men and women however, I found that the women felt far more constrained or limited by these rules than the men did. There was a greater gap for the women between their images of themselves and their images of academic scientists. For example, Peter was attracted to synthetic organic chemistry because it is a field where winning (being first) is the ultimate goal. Describing himself as a very competitive person who hates to lose, Peter felt completely at home in the competitive world of academic science.

In contrast, the gap between the women's image of themselves and their image of

academic scientists created a number of special difficulties for them. First, and most disturbingly, a common response on the part of the women, as in Amanda's case, was to assume that the gap was a result of some deficiency on their part. In other cases, the women felt as though they had to make themselves look like "real" academic scientists in ways that were uncomfortable or disconcerting. For example, Sylvia felt passionately about preserving the integrity of forest ecosystems and the dangers of logging. Yet, from her interpretation of inscriptions, she believed that if she pursued a career in the academy, she would have to temper or mask her underlying passion and behave more dispassionately about conducting and reporting on her research. This situation caused Sylvia to have serious concerns about becoming an academic scientist.

As I talked with the women in my study about inscriptions as a source of discomfort and insecurity, we were able to see the ways in which academic science was arbitrarily defined and perpetuated by inscriptions. For example, Sylvia began to question the idea that successful academic scientists must publish in prestigious journals like *Science* and *Nature*. Instead, when she recognized that the status of these journals could be bound up in historically arbitrary definitions of prestige, Sylvia made conscious choices about submitting her work to journals that were less prestigious but more likely to reach

forestry audiences important to her. With an awareness of how inscriptions were operating, Sylvia and the other women in my study began to talk about complying with or resisting the arbitrary expectations that inscriptions defined without suffering from the same feelings of inadequacy that had once come with believing these definitions to be inherently "correct."

By understanding the role that inscriptions play in arbitrarily defining a very narrow and limiting space for being an academic scientist, I found my co-participants could not only disrupt the damaging effects these seemingly natural definitions were having, but also, they could begin to think about ways to use inscriptions to create broader, more flexible, and more inclusive spaces for being an academic scientist. I believe Sylvia's conscious decision to submit a paper to a Canadian forestry journal rather than to *Science* or *Nature* is an example of making a choice that challenges traditional expectations for publishing. Amanda's recognition of the arbitrariness of traditional requirements for writing journal articles about experimental results enabled her to imagine writing an article that would openly discuss uncertainty. In creating this vision, Amanda was opening the space for writing "academically" that is so narrowly defined by academic science journals. These and other examples suggest to me that we can open up, push on, and manipulate the ways in which inscriptions act to define what it means to be an academic scientist. In doing so, we can begin the long hard work of making academic science a space that is more affirming and appealing to a women.

Sherie McClam receives her Ph.D. this spring. Her dissertation is titled, "Fitting in or Opting Out: Deconstructing the Marginalization of Women in Academic Science." She can be reached by email at capsalis@colorado.edu.

LEAP Workshops

Upcoming workshops and events sponsored by LEAP:

January 3-6, 2005

Introductory Leadership WKSP

Time and Location to be announced

October 12, 2004

Emotional IQ

Marcia Hughes

Emotional IQ

Time and Location to be announced

10:30am-12pm, UMC 247

November 2, 2004

Gender in Communication

Pat Heim

Gender and Communication

Time and Location to be announced

Below are quotes from evaluation forms completed by workshop participants across all workshops (2002-2004).

Leadership Workshops

The greatest strength of the workshop was: "[the] opportunity to hear from chairs, provost, CIRES director, and other on their personal leadership experiences."

"I came looking for skills on management and leadership, found these and more."

"I was able to understand many things about the university and its structure at all levels I did not know about. It provided a mine of useful information, a great source of support, and framed problems we experience in our department/university lives in a useful way."

"I think this workshop was GREAT! A stepping stone for a new definition of academic excellence."

"[The] combination of presentations, discussions, time for the group to 'bond' really made this a significant experience – beyond 'workshop'."

"I am a lot clearer now on what it takes to survive the 'comp review' and the 'tenure review'. I've gained a better self-understanding and greater self-confidence."

Coaching Workshops

"I think the diversity of the workshop participants and their willingness to share their own experiences was of great value."

"I have some colleagues who I can now contact for advice, outside perspectives, etc."

"We really hashed out the important issues that challenge young faculty members. The facilitator(s) was/were very perceptive and in tune with the group."

About the LEAP Project

(continued from page 1)

importance of ensuring that the composition of applicant pools reflect the composition of the potential candidate pool.

This year our plan is to LEAP AHEAD by Advancing opportunities for women, Helping to build professional networks,

Elevating civility and stewardship, Achieving success at every level and by Developing the quality of the work culture. This newsletter describes just some of our activities. Please look at our web site (advance.colorado.edu) and contact us if you are interested in learning more and/or participating in a LEAP workshop.



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Research Documents Pay Gaps between Men and Women in Academia

Robyn Marschke, a graduate student in Sociology, has been a Research Assistant on the LEAP project since 2002. She gathers institutional data and conducts statistical analyses regarding pay equity, attrition rates, female representation, and climate indicators among the CU faculty.

Her in-depth study of faculty salaries shows that the pay gap between men and women faculty grew since 1965. Her data show that, at the assistant professor rank, the pay ratio (women's earnings as a percentage of men's) improved between 1965 and 1990, where the ratio reached 97%. However, that ratio has declined steadily to 89% in 2002. While this pattern is cause for concern, Marschke warns that it may be explained as a consequence of pay differences across academic disciplines.

Marschke's research also revealed demographic trends regarding the number of female tenure-track/tenured faculty at CU-Boulder between 1965 and 2002. The percentage of women increased from 7% in 1965 to 27% in 2002, mostly because there has been a gradual increase of women while the male population has been relatively stable. Marschke claims that the university has done a good job of hiring women according to their representation among recent Ph.D. earners, but because demographic trends change very slowly, it will still take about 35 years to reach a gender integrated faculty if the university maintains the pace of change that occurred in the 1990s.

The LEAP project is culling even more information from a climate survey, which

was conducted last fall. The survey included non-tenure track faculty and researchers—a group that outnumbers tenure-track/tenured professors. Stay tuned for future results regarding respondents' assessments of collegiality, mentoring, leadership, diversity, and institutional support at CU-Boulder.

Robyn Marschke received her Ph.D. last Spring. Her dissertation is titled, "Gender Pay Equity Among University Faculty: Testing Segregation, Human Capital, Discrimination, and Demographic Inertia." It is temporarily available online at <http://socsci.colorado.edu/~marschke/Dissertation.doc>. She can be reached by email at marschke@colorado.edu.