



Institutional Portfolio
University of Colorado Boulder
(CU Boulder)

**University of Colorado Boulder Institutional Transformation Project:
Leadership Education for Advancement and Promotion (LEAP)**

Dates of Grant: January 2002 – December 2008 (Round 1)

PI: Patricia Rankin

Co-PIs: Todd Gleeson, Carol Lynch, Joyce Nielsen, Robert Schnabel, Mary Ann Shea, Tin Tin Su

Project Coordinator: Carole Capsalis

Key Elements of the Overall Change Strategy

Seeking to transform the makeup of the university's science and engineering faculties and to increase the number of STEM women serving in administrative positions, the LEAP program at CU Boulder was guided by the philosophy that a "rising tide lifts all ships." The program sought to improve the work environment for all faculty by improving faculty leadership and managerial skills, arguing that all faculty members, including women, would benefit when everyone developed the skills needed for success and when senior faculty members and administrators strengthened their leadership and mentoring skills and learned about the context as it affects women and how to be effective allies. The model focused on skills development rather than on fixing "perceived deficiencies." The proposal did not directly tackle policies or practices but argued that both retention and promotion rates would be increased by creating a more supportive environment. At the end of five years, the proposal expected the following goals to be achieved:

- more women in leadership positions in the university,
- a "cadre of faculty better able to pursue long-term change,"
- the existence of an "effective way to continue to train faculty for success," and
- evidence that "the changes initiated[d] will be self-sustainable through internal support."

Relevant Elements in the Institutional Context

- Prior to the ADVANCE project, the university's faculty development program focused only on teaching issues. The context was ripe for the development of opportunities for more extensive faculty and administrative development.
- The project was slowed by considerable change in the senior administration during the midst of the project and an athletic scandal that diverted much institutional attention and energy.
- Carnegie: Public RU/VH, comprehensive doctoral (no med/vet)

Scope of the ADVANCE Initiative

The program was designed to provide support throughout the campus, based on the assumption that everyone benefits when leaders have the necessary skills. Thus, men as well as women were invited to participate in programs and opportunities. While the project began with a focus on STEM fields, its programs were open to faculty and administrators in all departments.

Project Elements

Early Career and Leadership Development Workshops

LEAP identified and addressed various career stages at which faculty members need support and skill building in order to move forward successfully.

- Early-Career Faculty Workshops for women and men were three days long, with a one-day follow-up session. These focused on issues of concern to new faculty, including time management, communication and negotiation skills, interpersonal interactions and laboratory management, grant writing, and university tenure and promotion processes.
- Associate Professor Workshops were designed to help faculty move forward toward promotion to full professor, focusing on career planning and goal-setting.
- Chair/Senior Faculty Workshops two days in length were targeted to new chairs, followed by monthly meetings for all chairs.
- Post-doc workshops focused on aspects of the academic career.
- Single-topic workshops and seminars addressed leadership and diversity topics.

Small Grants

- Department Enhancement Grants were designed to encourage positive climate change and supportive departmental cultures. The focus of the grants varied considerably to address issues identified by the departments themselves.
- Individual Growth Grants were given to individual, mid-career faculty members (women or men) to help them progress toward the rank of full professor, pursue a new scholarly direction, or rejuvenate a scholarly program after a period of institutional service or personal or family challenges.

Coaching and Networking

The project initially created a centralized program to coach new faculty and those at the reappointment stage at elevated risk of career problems. While two cohorts of coaches participated in an extensive training program, this program was less attractive to early-career faculty members than expected and was revised to become a set of networking opportunities, such as writing groups, a pregnancy support group, and a book club. Monthly lunches were also held for women in key leadership positions at the university.

- Administrative Fellowship: Six women had the opportunity to try out senior-level administration by assuming an Associate Vice Chancellor role in a particular office half-time for the academic year.
- University Strategic Planning Project: This opportunity developed several years into the project. Women who had participated in various LEAP workshops and programs were invited to participate in a university strategic planning process.

Outcomes

- The impact on participants in workshops and through small grants was significant. Early-career faculty came to understand more fully the nature of the faculty career, and senior faculty and chairs developed a greater sense of empowerment, greater understanding of the university, and heightened confidence.
- Numerical evidence does not indicate that LEAP's activities led to more women in leadership positions or enhanced recruitment, retention, or advancement for women. However, qualitative evidence and some climate indicators suggest that LEAP contributed to a more supportive environment. Overall, LEAP raised awareness across campus about the importance of supporting faculty members in their career development and creating an environment that is welcoming, conducive to collegial interactions, and supportive of faculty professional growth.
- Several LEAP programs were institutionalized as a comprehensive faculty development program under the Office of Faculty Affairs. New faculty are offered a stipend for completion of the Assistant Professor workshop as part of their job offer letter.

Research Team Observations

- CU Boulder enhanced the overall culture of the institution in positive ways and created a needed faculty development program. However, the evidence is not strong that the project resulted in an increased number of women hired, retained, tenured, or advanced to senior positions in STEM fields or in the university more broadly. More explicit attention to procedures, policies, and metrics related to recruiting, selecting, hiring, evaluating, promoting, and advancing women may have been necessary to lead to greater changes in the numbers.

For Further Reading

The LEAP website provides an overview of the project's current activities:

<http://facultyaffairs.colorado.edu/leap>

Reports and articles from the project evaluation are gathered at

<http://www.colorado.edu/eer/research/womentransform.html#facdev>

To cite this document

Austin, A. E., & Laursen, S. L. (2014). Institutional Portfolio: University of Colorado Boulder. In Laursen, S. L., & Austin, A. E. (2014). *StratEGIC Toolkit: Strategies for Effecting Gender Equity and Institutional Change*. Boulder, CO, and East Lansing, MI. www.strategictoolkit.org

This research study and development of the StratEGIC Toolkit and other products has been supported by the National Science Foundation through ADVANCE PAID grant #HRD-0930097. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations are those of the researchers and do not necessarily represent the official views, opinions, or policy of the National Science Foundation.