



Institutional Change Project Year 1 Report
Institutions Developing Excellence in Academic Leadership (IDEAL)

IDEAL Partner Institution: Cleveland State University

Co-Director: (name and title) Paul Lin, Associate Dean, College of Engineering

Change Project Team Member: (names and titles) Barbara Margolius, Professor, Department of Mathematics; Kathleen McNamara, Professor, Department of Psychology, and Paul Lin, Associate Dean of Engineering

Team Coach: (name and title) C. Greer Jordan, Principal, Currie Rhodes Consulting & Research

Institutional Transformation Theme (as defined by the Co-director in the proposal): Encouraging Science and Engineering women and under-represented minority faculty to self-diagnose their knowledge of leadership, and gain that knowledge by actively participating in institutional policy-making committees such as the Faculty Senate and Graduate Council.

Institutional Transformation Vision (as created by the Co-director and change leader team during the leadership development sessions): Women and under-represented minorities demonstrate greater engagement in leadership activities as a result of changes in policies, practices, and structures that may currently impede such engagement.

Change Project Description:

Interpretation/adaptation of the institutional transformation theme during Year 1 (if appropriate):

Two principal themes pertaining to women and under-represented minorities underlay the original transformation theme: self-diagnosis of knowledge of leadership; and involvement in institutional policy-making. These themes were adapted by the change leader team (a) to diagnose conditions at CSU that might influence ability and willingness to assume leadership roles; and (b) to focus on infrastructure (policies, practices, structures) that would make engagement in leadership more attractive and feasible.

How does the change project advance the institutional change theme and vision?

With knowledge of CSU-specific issues that might impede or advance engagement in leadership by women and under-represented minorities, the institution can undertake needed changes or improvements in policy and practice, thereby promoting the attainment of the transformation vision.

Scope of this year's change project: level of coverage (university, school/college, departments), nature of interventions, how many faculty were involved in the interventions, etc.

This year's project focused on the College of Engineering and the College of Science. To understand the perspective of faculty who might consider engagement in leadership, focus groups were conducted; approximately one dozen faculty participated in or contributed information for these groups. In addition, data were collected to describe CSU's status relative to various NSF indicators of the role and status of women and under-represented minorities.

Goals/Objectives of the Change Project:

To clearly define the scope of the problem of under-representation of women and ethnic minorities in positions of leadership at CSU; to identify factors that create barriers to participation in leadership activities; to increase awareness of the problem and its causes among members of the CSU community.

Activities Undertaken:

Number/dates of meetings of the change leader team:

The CSU Change Leader Team met as follows: December, 2009 (CWRU); January 28, 2010 (KSU); February 23, 2010 (CSU – with coach); March 23, 2010 (CSU team); March 25, 2010 (U of Akron); April 20, 2010 (CSU – with external evaluator); April 22, 27, 29 (CSU – focus group meetings); May 13, 2010 (U of Toledo); June 7, 2010 (CSU team); June 22, 2010 (CSU team); June 24, 2010 (CSU – with coach).

Dates of the meetings with team coaches: February 23, 2010, and June 24, 2010

Details of any meetings with Provost, deans, and other senior university administrators: Meeting with Provost is scheduled for July 19, 2010

Detailed description of project activities – what, who, when, how:

Between March and June, 2010, members of the Change Leader Team gathered data on select NSF indicators, as well as information about gender/minority representation in key leadership roles in the university and within the Engineering and Science colleges (e.g., department chairpersons; chairpersons of influential college and departmental committees). This information was solicited from the CSU Institutional Research office, as well as college and departmental committee and department chairpersons. In April, 2010, the team conducted three focus group sessions, to which faculty of the Engineering and Science colleges were invited. Approximately one dozen faculty participated in three one-hour sessions (no identifying information was collected), and transcripts of the audio-recorded focus group sessions were created and analyzed to identify recurring or major themes in discussions of leadership participation, barriers, and incentives.

Resources/Alliances Harnessed Across Campus:

The Office of Institutional Research supplied requested data; Change Team members consulted with representatives of the Presidential Committee on the Role and Status of Women, and supplied information to them.

Project Accomplishments/Findings:

Summarize your findings (e.g., themes from focus groups)

Themes that emerged from focus group sessions indicated a need to examine policies, practices, and structures that influence faculty early in their careers at CSU – including those pertaining to recruitment of new faculty. According to focus group participants, engagement in leadership can be detrimental to one’s career path, and mixed messages are sometimes conveyed about the desirability of service and leadership, especially among women. Findings suggested that women may be disproportionately represented in low-level service and leadership; that is, they are devoting energy to activities that are not conducive to, and may in fact be detrimental to, career advancement. These activities are undertaken to the detriment of their research and publication efforts, which are assigned much greater value in the promotion and tenure decision-making process. Participants observed that mentoring practices; clarity of and adherence to policies regarding parental leave and its impact on promotion and tenure; availability of university-sponsored childcare; support for relocation of spouses or partners; and support for resolution of immigration-related issues are factors that influence recruitment and retention. The basis for engagement in leadership has to do with support of faculty through the promotion and tenure process, as well as quality of life and campus climate.

The leadership training course that was designed and taught in Spring, 2010 by former Provost Dr. Chin Kuo was well-received according to course evaluations. All of the participants thought that the course would be beneficial to their career goal as an academic administrator, and they are more inclined to pursue an academic administration job in the future. The course, in complement with this project, gave the pros and cons for becoming an academic leader, and served the purpose of helping faculty in self-diagnosing their knowledge of leadership. Nevertheless, the Change Leader team found that faculty engagement in leadership roles was more dependent on factors identified by focus groups, than on their knowledge about leadership.

Recommendations:

What do you recommend?

- 1) Solicit support from the Office of Institutional Research to continue tracking NSF indicators;
- 2) Given limited opportunities for hiring new tenure-track faculty at CSU, establish policies and practices supporting the development and increased engagement of current faculty (to build a leadership “pipeline”), and which will increase the attractiveness of departments for potential future hires.

3) Review the process of locating and recruiting new faculty, including an examination of the pools of women and minority candidates and the extent to which spousal or partner career opportunities play a role in candidate decisions. The emphasis of the existing hiring process, in many departments, is on compliance with regulations, rather than on highlighting aspects of the university and community that make employment at CSU a desirable career opportunity.

4) Respond to faculty interest in receiving mentoring, particularly at the level of Assistant Professor.

5) CSU does not make leadership roles attractive; they are often viewed negatively by faculty. There should be a more in-depth exploration of the manner in which leadership is perceived at CSU, particularly the important role of department chairperson, and efforts should be made to make these roles more appealing to faculty. Chairs are perceived as “squeezed” between the competing demands of administration and faculty, and often lack training in needed managerial and leadership skills.

6) Focus on recruitment and development of current CSU faculty, and enhance the CSU culture to make it more attractive to a diverse faculty membership.

To whom?

Future IDEAL Change Leader Teams; Provost; College Deans; Department Chairpersons.

Priorities?

Examination of institutional practices, policies, and structures related to the recruitment and retention of women and under-represented minorities; effect change to promote clarity and equitable application of policies and structures.

Sustainability Plans for Institutionalizing the Activities/Recommendations of the Change Project

Recommend that the Office of Institutional Research continue collection of data on NSF indicators; The 2010 Team is enlisting support of the Provost, who can provide linkages to other resources, identify other groups that can become involved in team efforts, and assist the team in identifying policies, practices, and structures that can be targets for change.

Challenges Encountered or Likely:

1) Limited authorizations to hire new faculty, given budget conditions. Therefore, it is unlikely that data collected over the next several years will reveal any substantive changes in faculty membership or leadership participation.

2) Uncertainty about the state budget; cuts in higher education funding are likely, so internal resources and support from administrative units and colleges will be curtailed further.

3) Possibly negative faculty perceptions of change initiatives. Therefore, grassroots involvement is essential. For example, faculty appreciated having input through focus group participation.

4) Perception among some faculty that placing a priority on hiring diverse faculty may not result in hiring the “best person” for the job.

5) Perception among faculty that collection of information (i.e., through focus groups) will not lead to any action. Therefore, there is a need to provide summary information and feedback to faculty, and the plans and progress of the Change Leader Team initiatives should be publicized.

Dissemination Activities and Plans:

Meeting with Provost to share information and explore potential future plans (July, 2010);

Meeting with Deans of the Engineering and Science colleges to share information and explore potential future plans (to be determined, in connection with Provost meeting).