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*Women in Science & Engineering Leadership Institute*  
*University of Wisconsin-Madison*



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# Vilas Life Cycle Professorship Program

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# Life Cycle Research Grant Program

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***From the original grant proposal:***

*Research grants will be available to women faculty at critical junctures in their professional careers (e.g., between grants, a new baby, parent care responsibilities).*

*These grants are meant to be flexible and women may apply for varying amounts and academic purposes.*



## LCRG Goals

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- Recognize that life events outside of one's control happen
  - Both men and women experience such events, but women are more likely to experience them early in the career, when they are more vulnerable
- Reduce turnover by providing research support for faculty in crisis
- Understand what events are problematic and which career junctures are most critical
- Understand what faculty need when they are in crisis



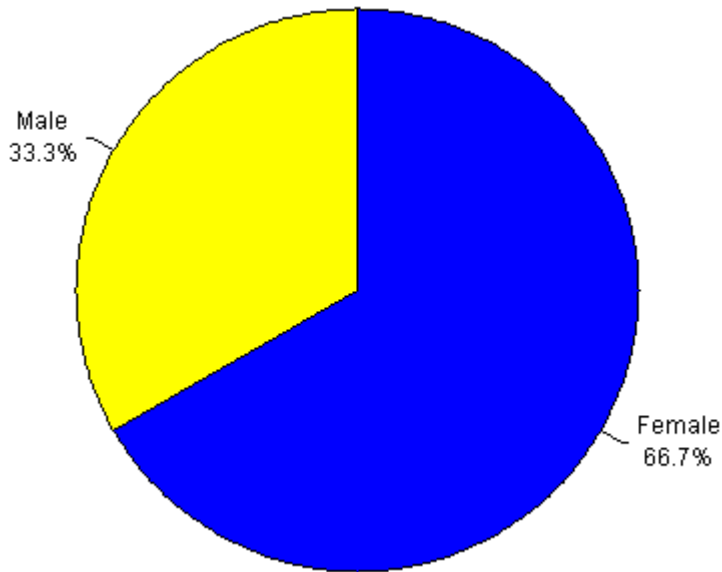
# Life Cycle Grant Program—Timeline

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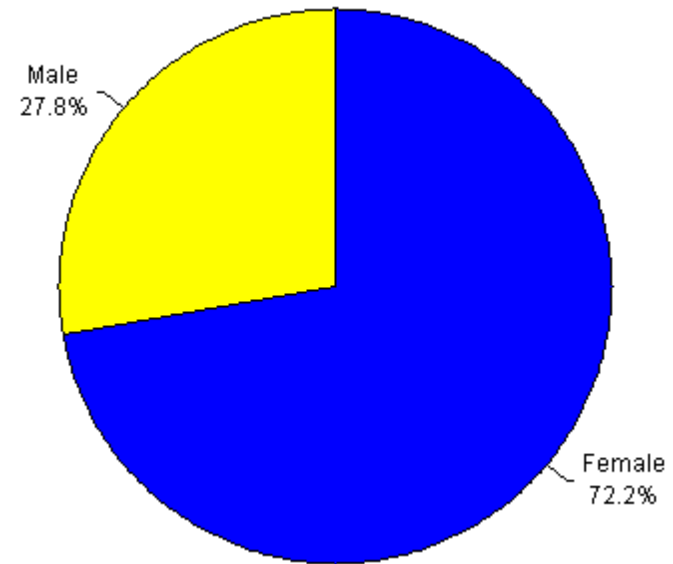
- Fall 2002 – Spring 2004, Pilot Program
  - Four rounds, 17 Applicants, 7 Awards
  - ADVANCE funding supplemented by Graduate School
- Fall 2004, Bridge Funding
  - One round, 5 Applicants, 3 Awards
  - Graduate School and Provost Office funding
- Spring 2005 +, Vilas Life Cycle Professorships
  - Three rounds/year, 27 Applicants, 18 Awards (Year 1)
  - Vilas Trust funding, \$310,000 per year



# Life Cycle Grant Program—Data



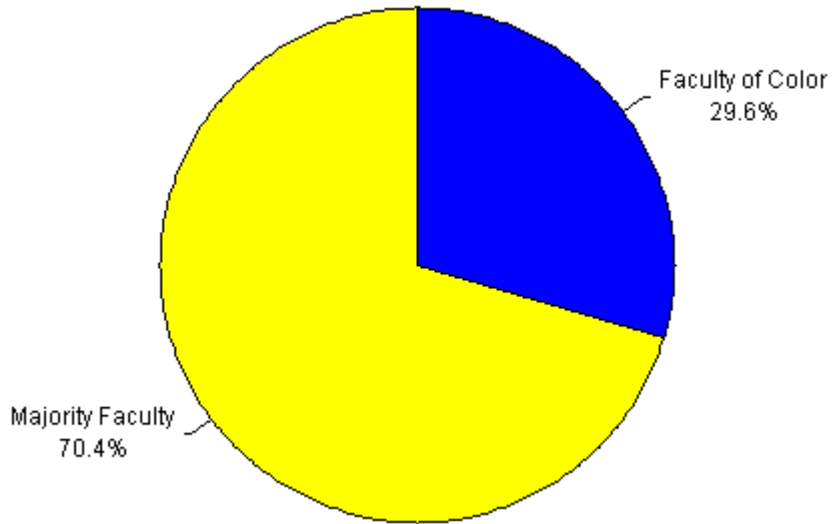
Applicants



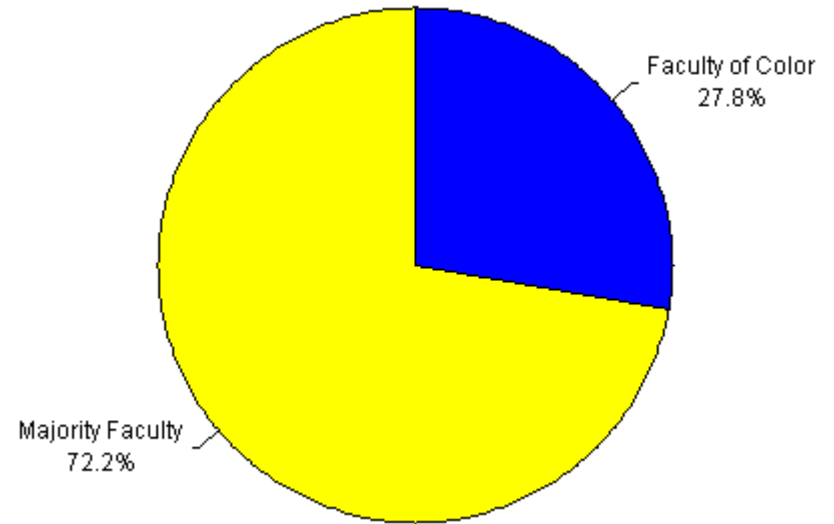
Awardees



# Life Cycle Grant Program—Data



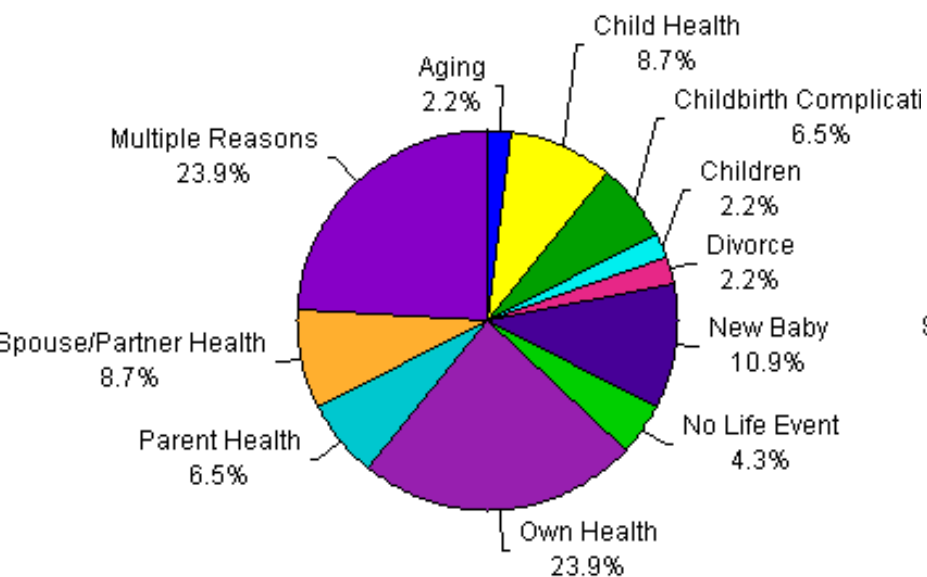
Applicants



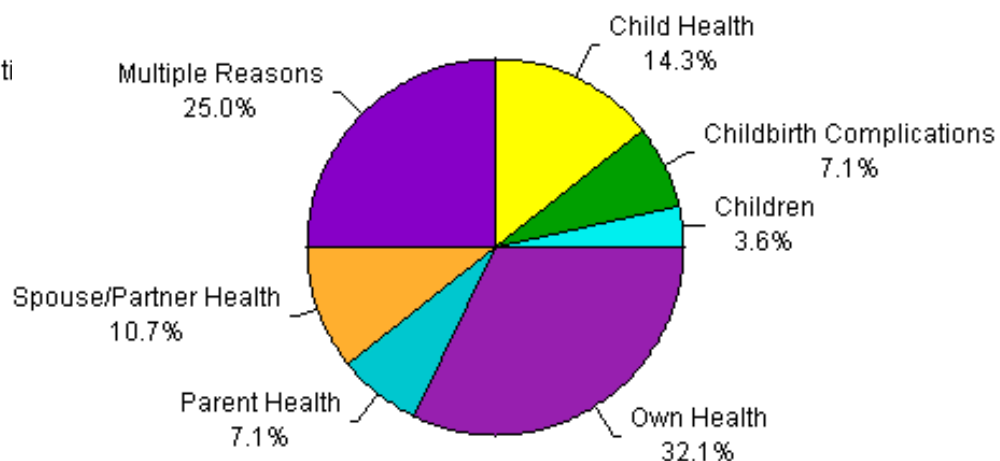
Awardees



# Life Cycle Grant Program—Data



Applicants



Awardees



## How do we know it works?

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- Summative Evaluation Report
- Changed Minds
- Institutional Support/Institutionalization
- Continued Success and Recognition



## Summative Evaluation—Design

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- Purpose: *provide information about the impact of the program on the recipients of the grants.*
- Focused on years 1-2
  - In-depth interviews with 4 recipients
  - Follow-up emails and calls
- Five main themes emerged



# Summative Evaluation—Findings

- The Only Grant Based on Personal Need, Not Professional Merit
  - “We need to change the culture”
- Came at a Critical Juncture in Their Personal and Professional Lives
  - “It helped me realign”
- Provided Psychological Support
  - “I’m out of the downhill spiral”
- Had Impact on Others’ Lives, as Well
  - “I wanted to hire, but I would have had to fire”
- Is an Investment in the Grantees’ Futures and the University’s
  - “It was an investment in me”



## Summative Evaluation—Conclusions

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- Small investment led to significant outcomes, both qualitative and quantitative
- The interviewees identified NO negative impacts from receiving the grant
- All are completely supportive of the program
- Significantly impacted their professional progress, ability to function personally, and decision to stay at the University



# Changing Minds/Winning Support

- Clip of Tim Mulcahy





The University of Wisconsin-Madison





# Institutional Support/Institutionalization

- Short term: Provost Office & Graduate School
- Long term: Funded by the Estate of William F. Vilas
  - Extended to all UW-Madison faculty and permanent PIs
  - \$310,000 per year
  - Renewable annually contingent upon continued positive evaluation results
  - WISELI retains control of grant administration as long as we exist, otherwise reverts to the Provost's Office
  - Grants renamed: ***Vilas Life Cycle Professorships***

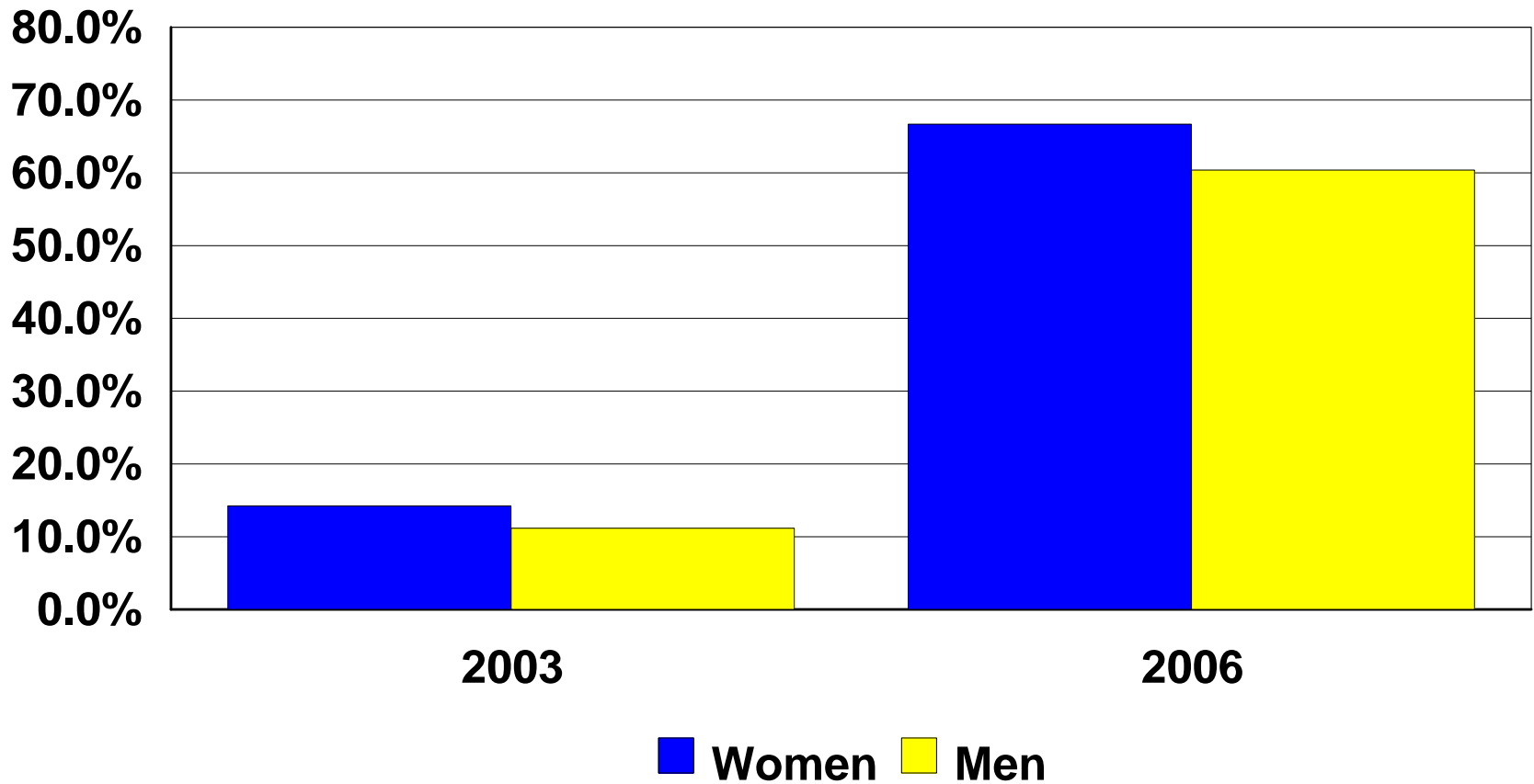


## Continued Success

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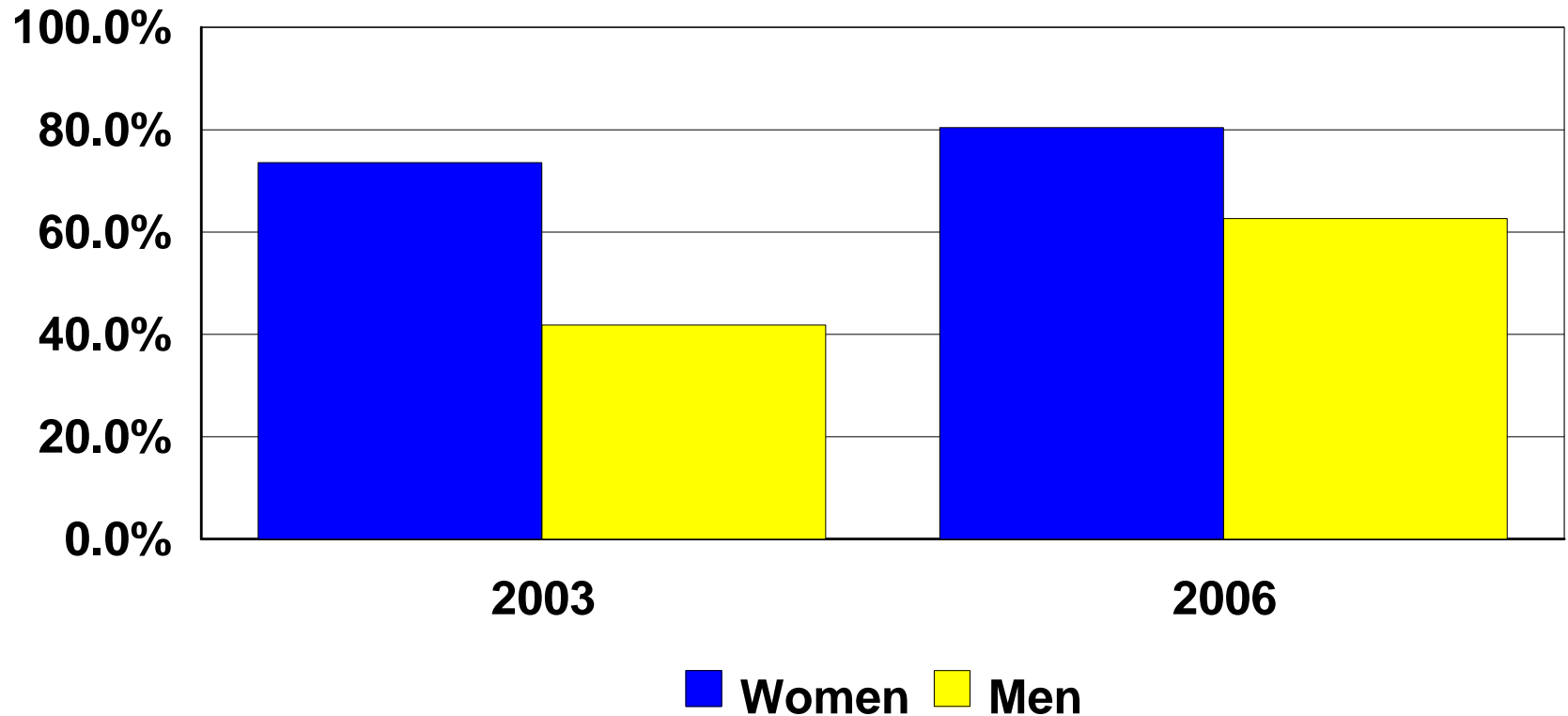
- Annual evaluation to maintain the Vilas award
  - Recently awarded \$310,000 for a second year
- Recognition from Sloan Foundation
  - \$25,000 award recognizing the program as “a model for innovative policies and practices for faculty career flexibility”
- Widespread support of faculty

# Know About Life Cycle Grant Program Climate Survey Data, 2003/2006



# Life Cycle Grant Program "Very" or "Quite" Valuable\*

## Climate Survey Data, 2003/2006



\* Calculated for those who have heard of program.



## Summary—Keys to Success

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- Innovative and popular program
- Available to both women and men
- ★ ■ Qualitative evaluation....”the power of the quote”
- Access to top-level administrators who value data
- Continued monitoring and evaluation



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