Why Does ADVANCE Need Sociologists?

Jennifer Sheridan
University of Wisconsin-Madison
ADVANCE at the UW-Madison

- WISELI—the Women in Science & Engineering Leadership Institute
  - Molly Carnes, M.D., M.S. (Gerontology, public health)
  - Jo Handelsman, Ph.D. (Microbiology)
  - Jennifer Sheridan, Ph.D. (Sociology)
  - Leadership Team: Faculty & Staff in Engineering, Physics, Biology, Chemistry
- Biological and Physical Sciences ONLY
ADVANCE at the UW-Madison: Major Initiatives

- Workplace Interactions
  - Searching for Excellence & Diversity: Hiring Workshops
  - Enhancing Department Climate: A Chair’s Role
- Work/Life Balance
  - Vilas Life Cycle Research Grants
- Networking/Visibility
  - Celebrating Women in S&E Grants
  - WISELI Seminar
  - WISELI Website & Listserv
  - Leadership Development/Mentoring Senior Women
- Other
  - Research & Evaluation
  - WISELI Documentary Videos

http://wiseli.engr.wisc.edu
What does Sociology bring to an ADVANCE program?
Approach the problems above the individual level

- Need the “sociological imagination”
- Institutional Transformation requires an approach that is ABOVE the individual-level
  - Revise practices/processes (e.g., hiring, tenure)
  - Reform or create policies (e.g., tenure clock extensions)
  - Improve climate (departmental, institutional)
  - Increase visibility of women
Data & Methodology

- Qualitative & quantitative data are necessary
  - Interviews, focus groups, observational data
  - Surveys, institutional data
  - Evaluation data
- Data analysis techniques
Activism and Social Change

- Sociologists—see a social problem and use research to make change
- Similar to the ADVANCE approach
Enhancing Department Climate: A Chair’s Role

- 3-session workshop series
- Small (4-6) group of department chairs from different schools/colleges
- Fall 2003 to Present – 26 Department Chairs have participated
  - 36% of all Biological and Physical Science Departments
Session 1: What is climate? How does it manifest in your department? What issues are you hoping to address in this workshop?
Departmental Climate: Selected Items

- Feel respected by colleagues
- Colleagues value my research
- I feel I "fit" in my department
- I feel isolated in my department
- Full & equal participant in decision-making

% Agree Strongly or Somewhat

[Graph showing bar chart with data for women, men, and department chairs]
The climate for women in my department is good

% Agree Strongly or Somewhat

Women Faculty

Men Faculty

Dept. Chairs
The climate for faculty of color in my department is good

- Faculty of Color
- Majority Faculty
- Dept. Chairs
"I think as little as four years ago, [the department] was a very unfriendly, hostile environment. But when [the new chair] came in...she seems to have completely changed the tenor of [the department]. It’s very friendly—everyone says that since she came, it’s totally different. I would not have come if she weren’t here."
Enhancing Department Climate: A Chair’s Role

- Session 2: Confidential report of climate survey results
Confidential Department Surveys

- Surveys sent to approximately 2,998 individuals
- 1,392 people responded for a response rate of 47%
  - Larger departments tend to have lower response rates in the 30-40% range.
  - Smaller departments tend to have response rates in the 60-70% range.
Enhancing Department Climate: A Chair’s Role

- Session 3: What did you change and how did it work?
Evidence of Effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The climate is:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Significantly more positive</td>
<td>2 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat more positive</td>
<td>12 (63%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The same as it was before</td>
<td>5 (26%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat more negative</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significantly more negative</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Evidence of Effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Departments Resurveyed</th>
<th>Mean 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Survey</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Survey</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department A</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department B</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department C</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department D</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>-0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Mean Score</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.47</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>3.72</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>0.25</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The table shows the mean scores from the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> surveys for each department, along with the change in scores.
- The overall mean score increased from 3.47 to 3.72, indicating an improvement.
Percent Agree: The Climate for Women In My Department is Good

- Participating
- Non-Participating

Women

Men

Chairs

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2006</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chairs</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Enhancing Department Climate: A Chair’s Role

An intervention with “sociological imagination”

- Intervention designed to affect the departmental climate—not the individual
- Use of both qualitative and quantitative data throughout workshop
- Explicit focus on CHANGE