



W I S E L I

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



Why Does ADVANCE Need Sociologists?

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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

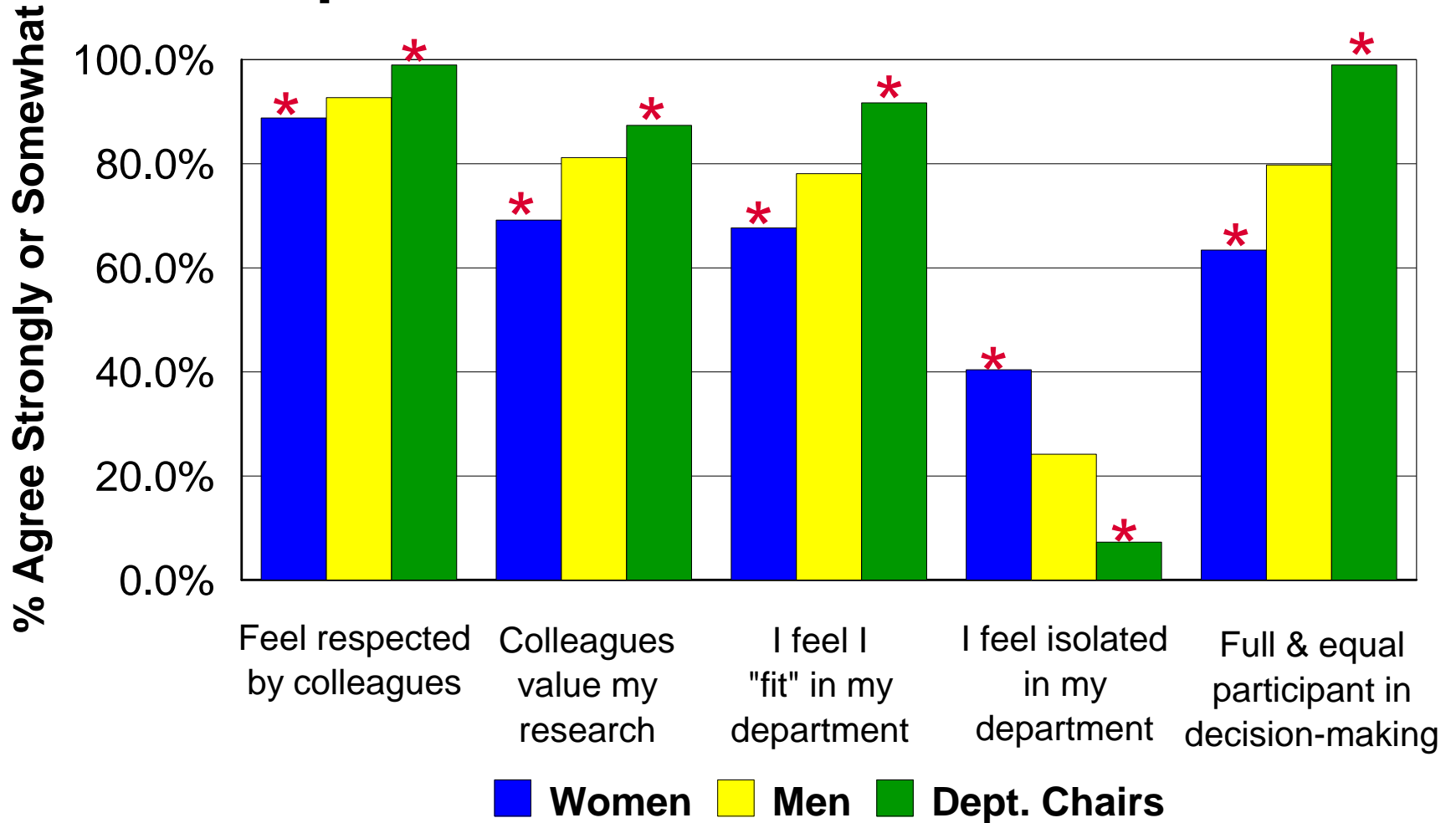
- 3-session workshop series
- Small (4-6) group of department chairs *from different schools/colleges*
- Fall 2003 to Present – 26 Department Chairs have participated
 - 36% of all Biological and Physical Science Departments



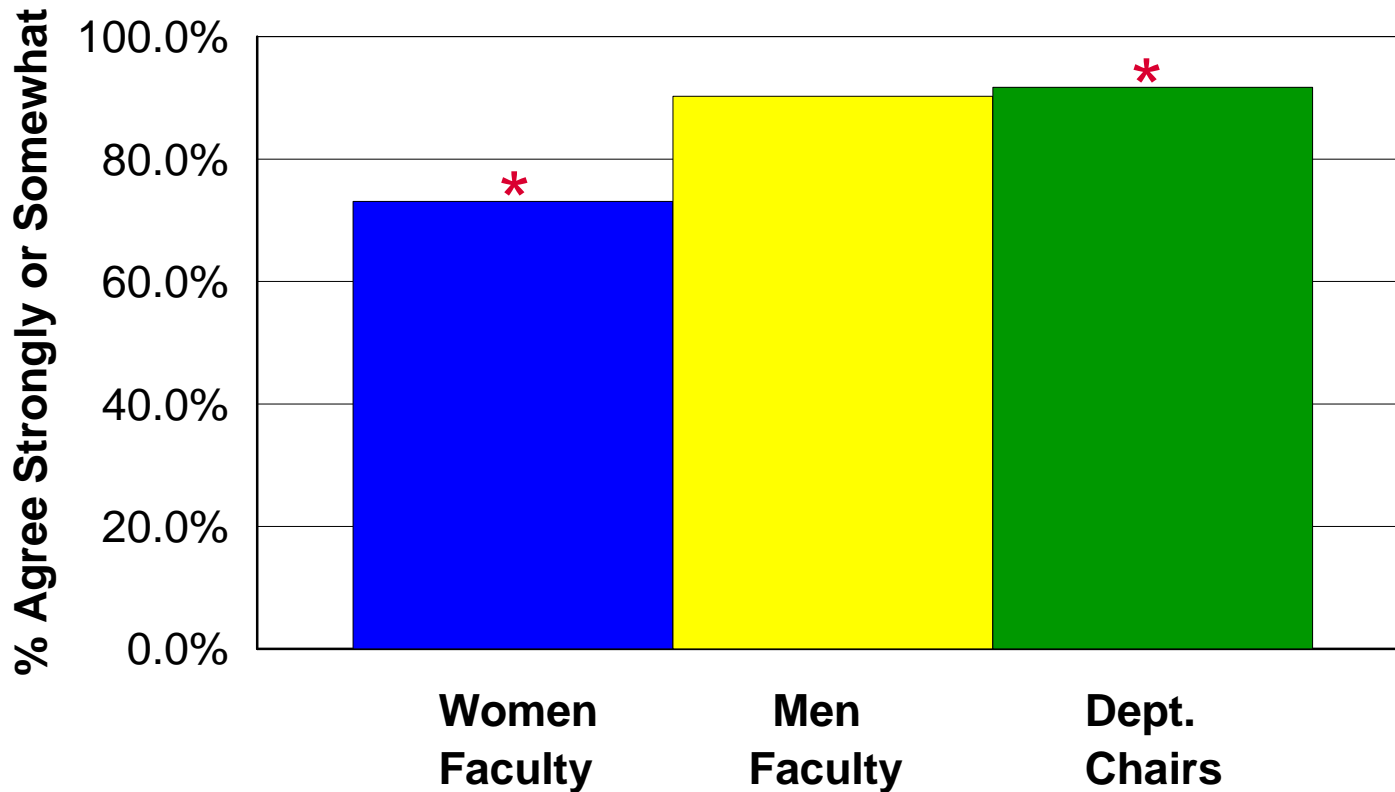
Enhancing Department Climate: A Chair's Role

- Session 1: What is climate? How does it manifest in your department? What issues are you hoping to address in this workshop?

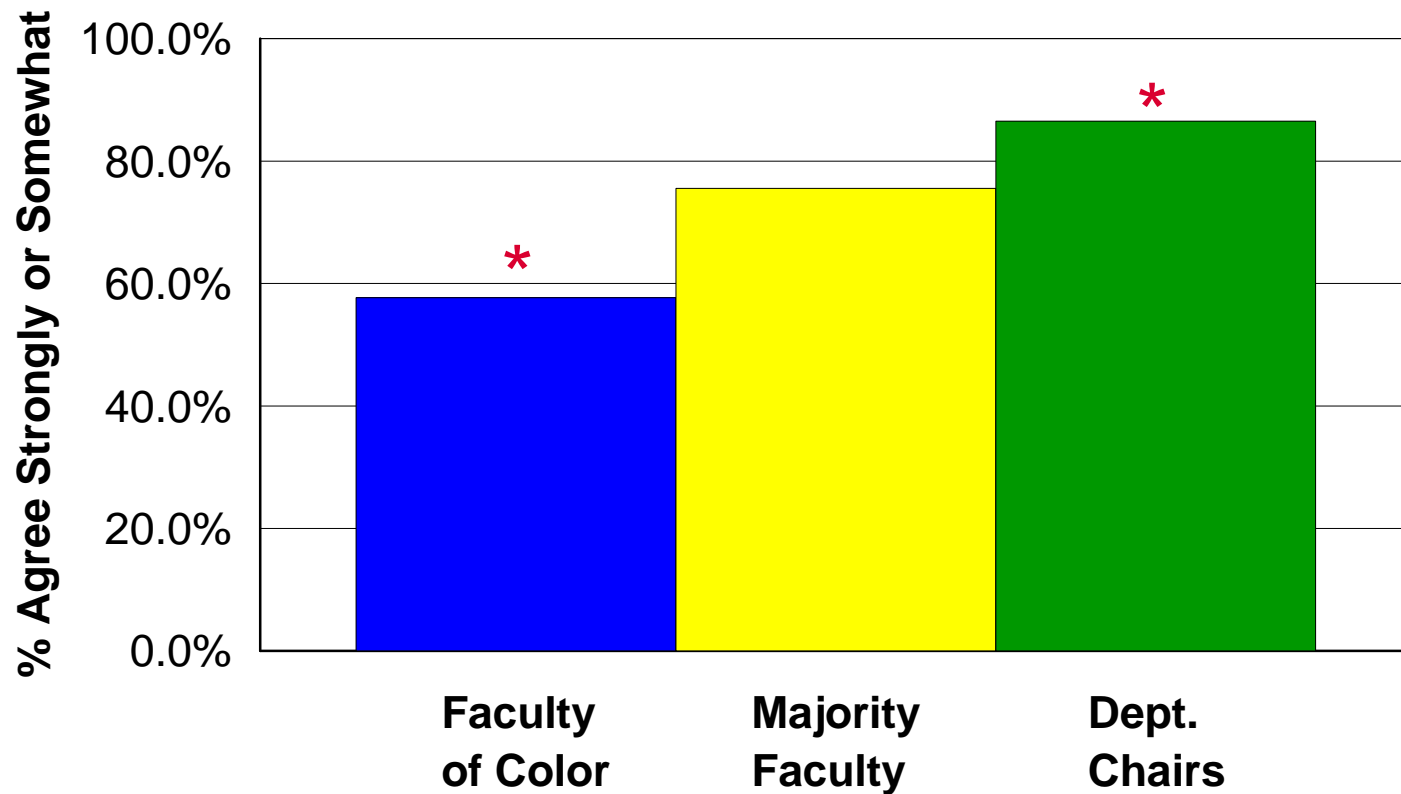
Departmental Climate: Selected Items



The climate for women in my department is good



The climate for faculty of color in my department is good





Additional Evidence

- “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

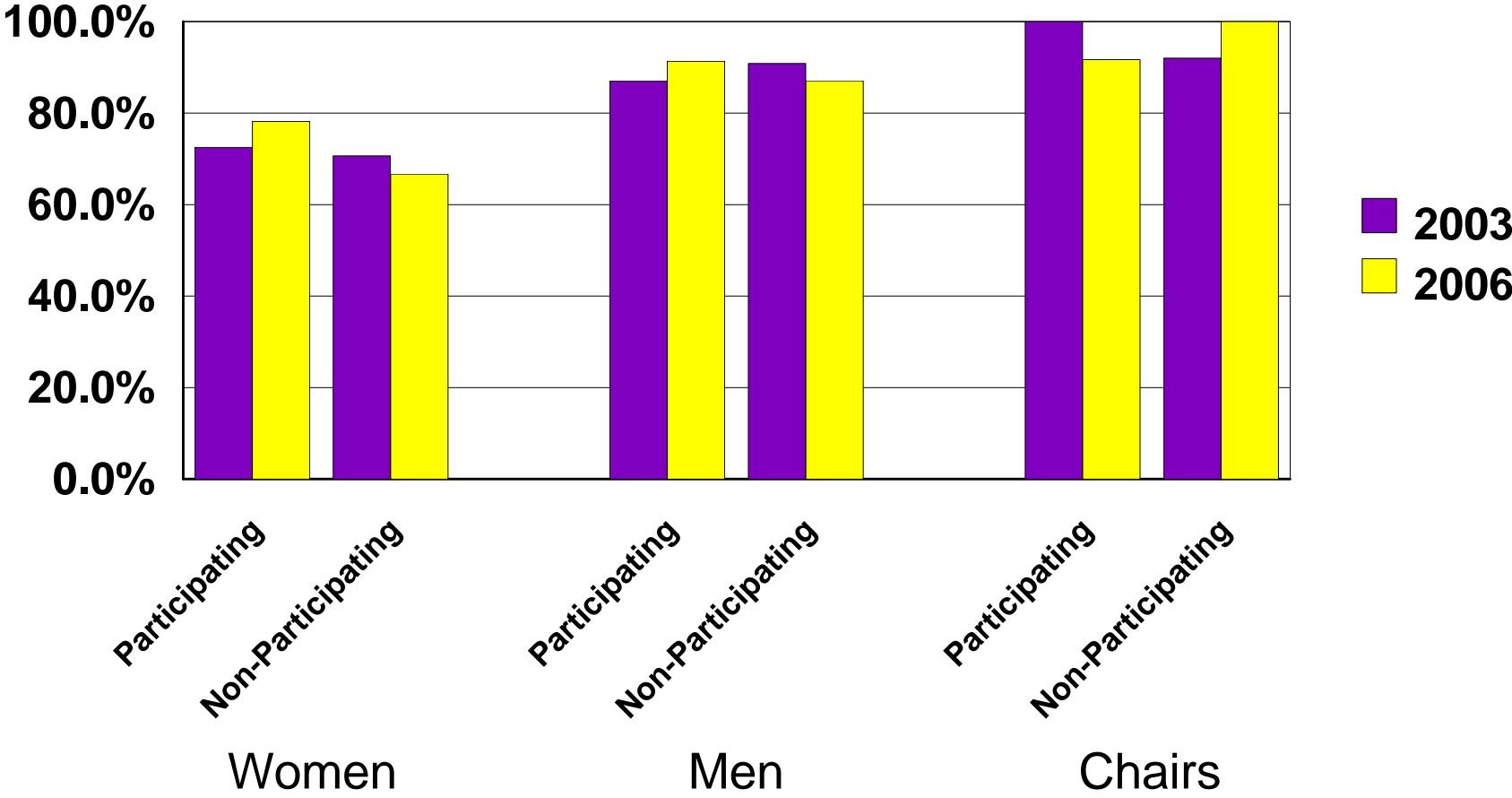
The climate is:	
Significantly more positive	2 (11%)
Somewhat more positive	12 (63%)
The same as it was before	5 (26%)
Somewhat more negative	0
Significantly more negative	0



Evidence of Effectiveness

Departments Resurveyed	Mean 1 st Survey	N	Mean 2 nd Survey	N	Change
Department A	3.21	24	3.71	56	0.5
Department B	3.07	15	3.29	17	0.22
Department C	3.82	60	4.25	53	0.43
Department D	3.79	124	3.63	86	-0.16
Overall Mean Score	3.47		3.72		0.25

Percent Agree: The Climate for Women In My Department is Good





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



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