



W I S E L I

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

Climate and Institutional Change

ADVANCE efforts to improve
departmental climate



Why Climate?

- Recruitment—women more likely to come to a department with good climate
- Retention—women faculty more likely to stay in a department with good climate
- Advancement—women more likely to be promoted and recognized for their achievements



What is “climate”?

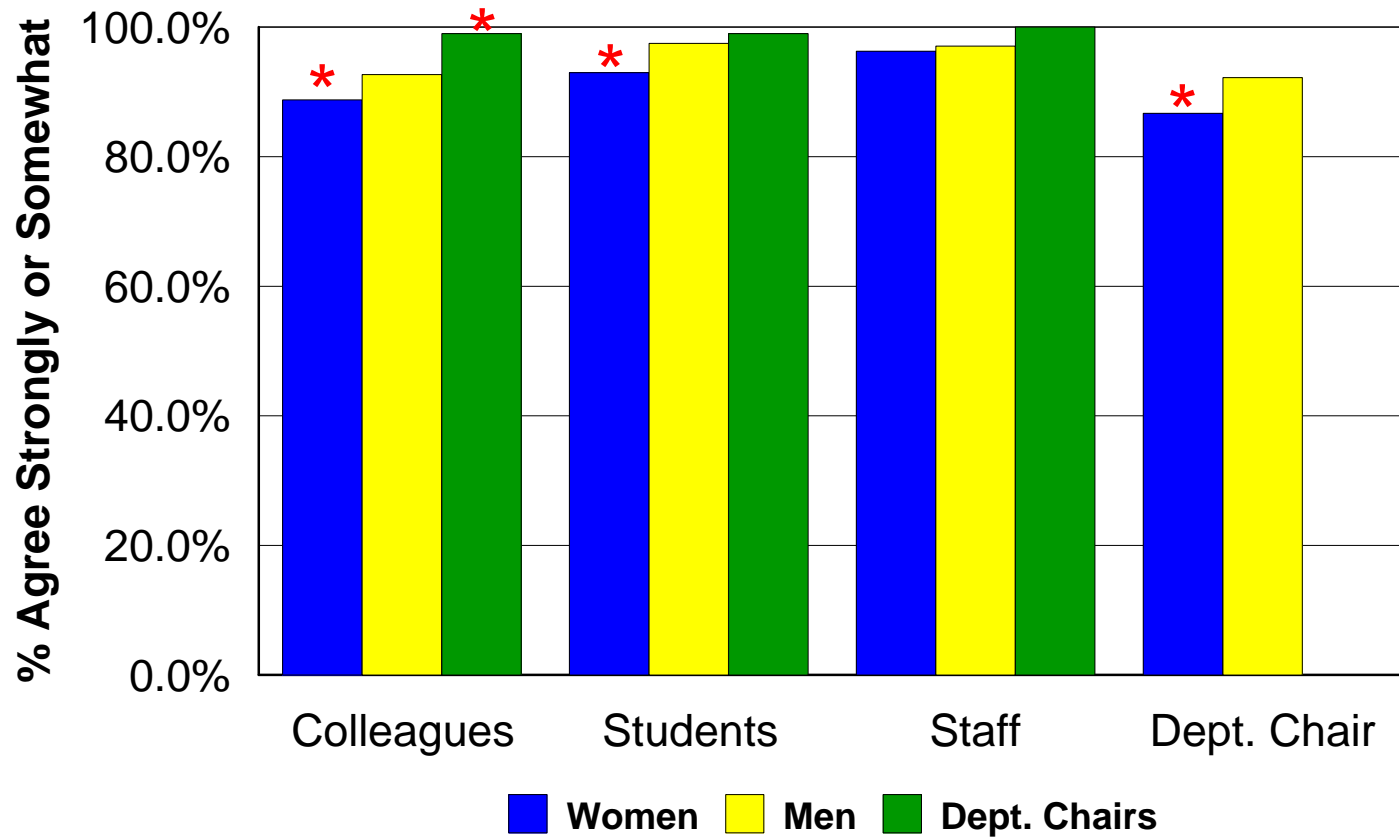
- **Climate:** The atmosphere or ambience of an organization as perceived by its members. An organization's climate is reflected in its structures, policies, and practices; the demographics of its membership; the attitudes and values of its members and leaders; and the quality of personal interactions. *Committee on Women in the University's Work Group on Climate* (Summer, 2002).
- **Local** climate is the key!



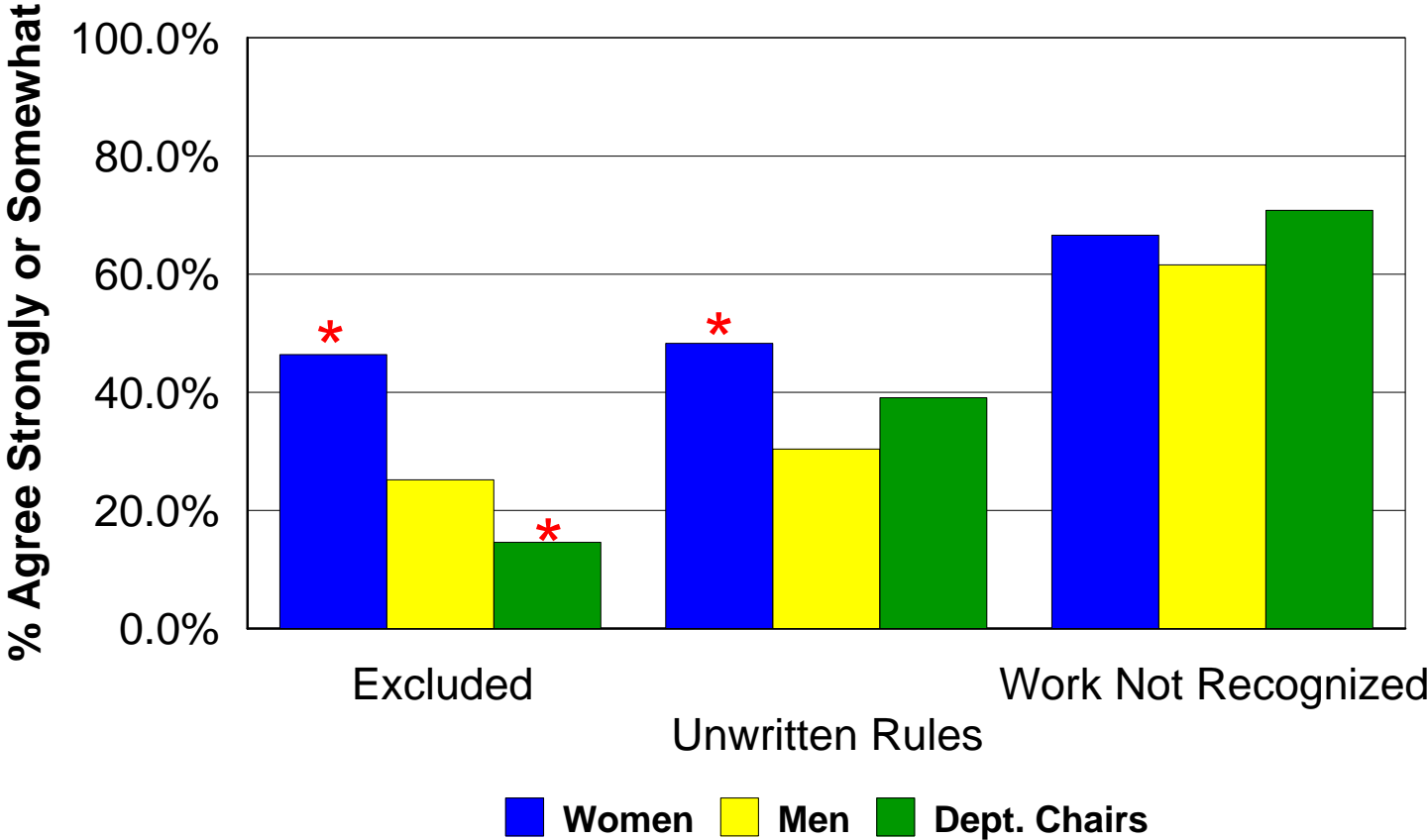
Measuring “climate”

- Policies and Procedures (work/life balance, promotion & tenure, mentoring, etc.)
- NSF Indicators
- Qualitative Data (Interviews)
- Climate Surveys

Treated With Respect in the Workplace



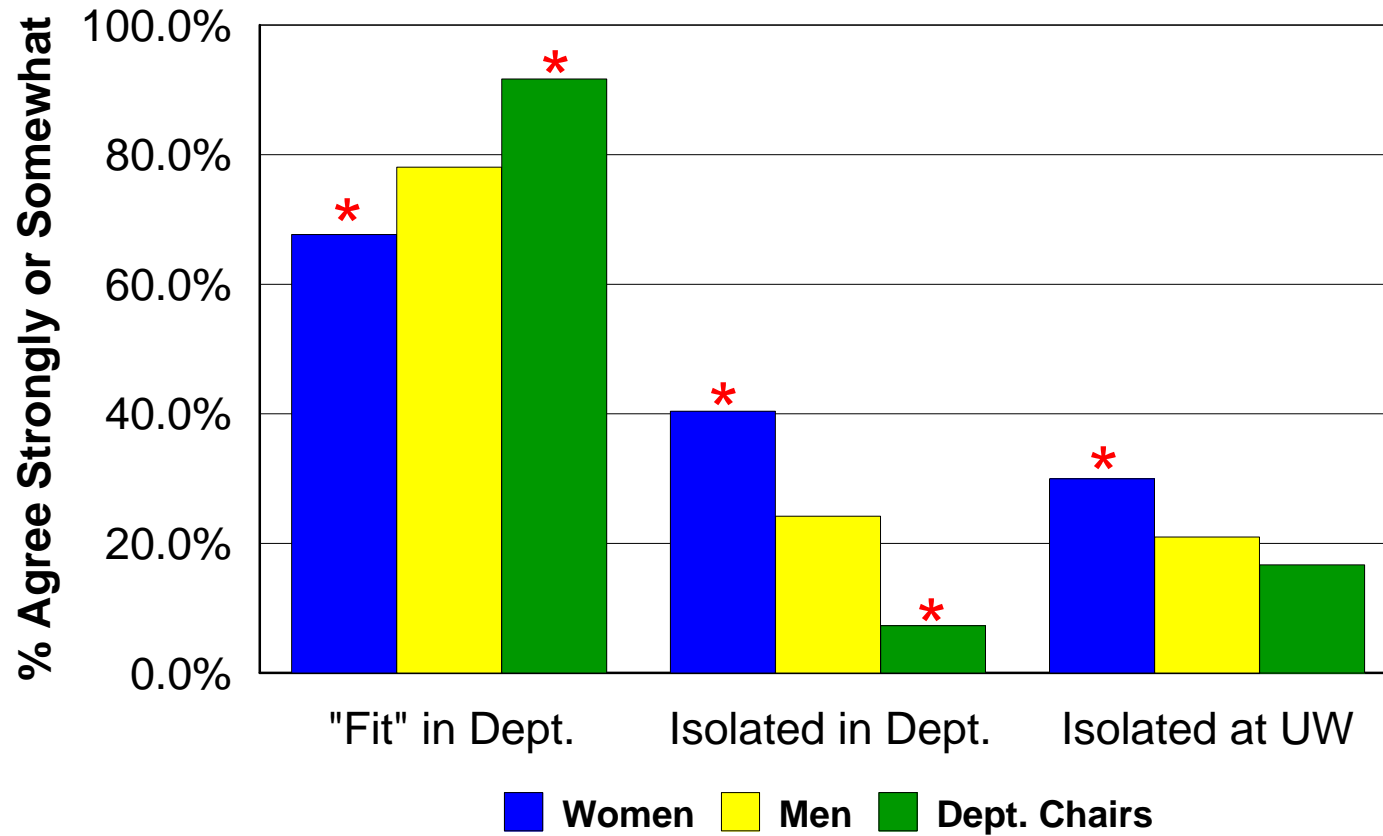
Informal Departmental Interactions



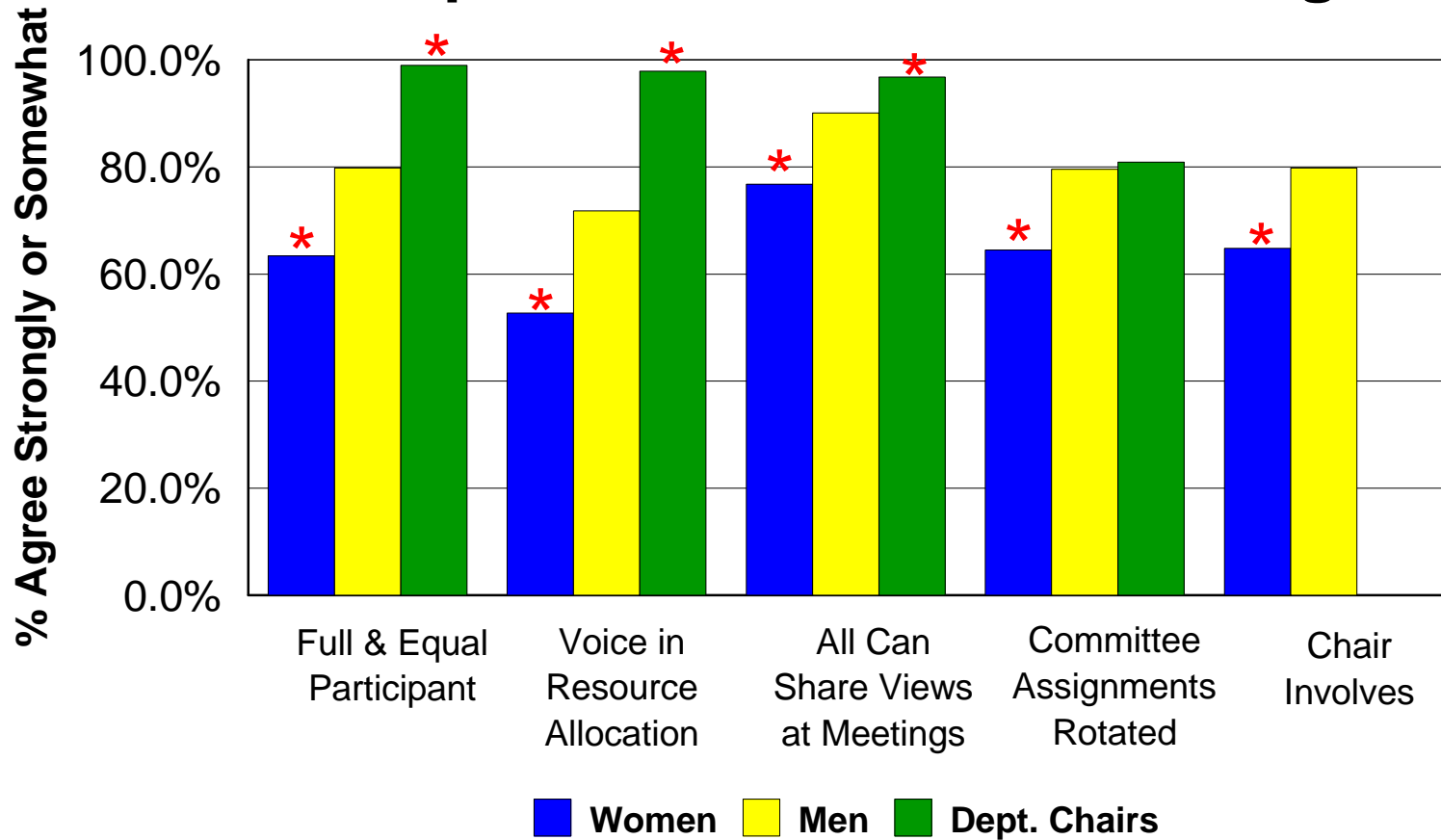
Colleagues' Valuation of Research



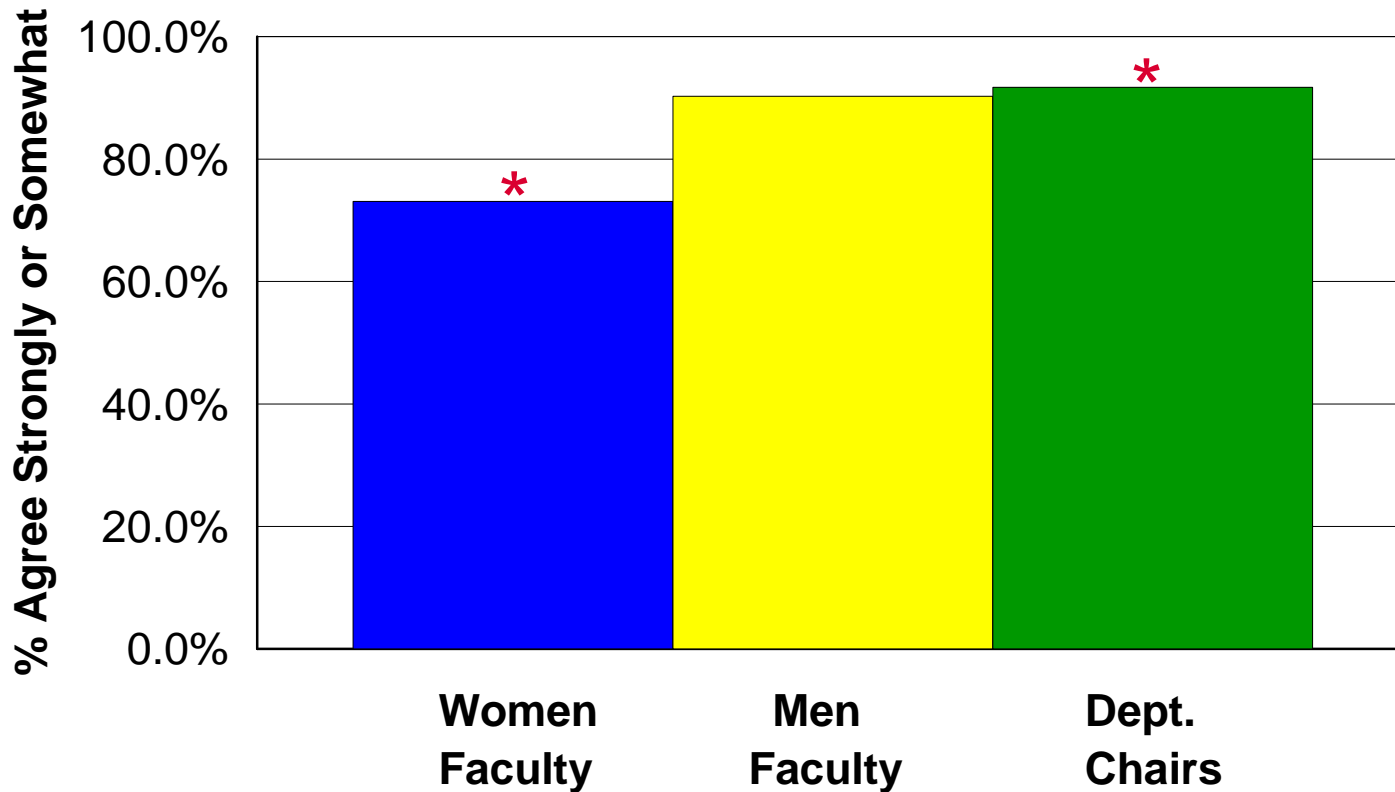
Isolation and "Fit"



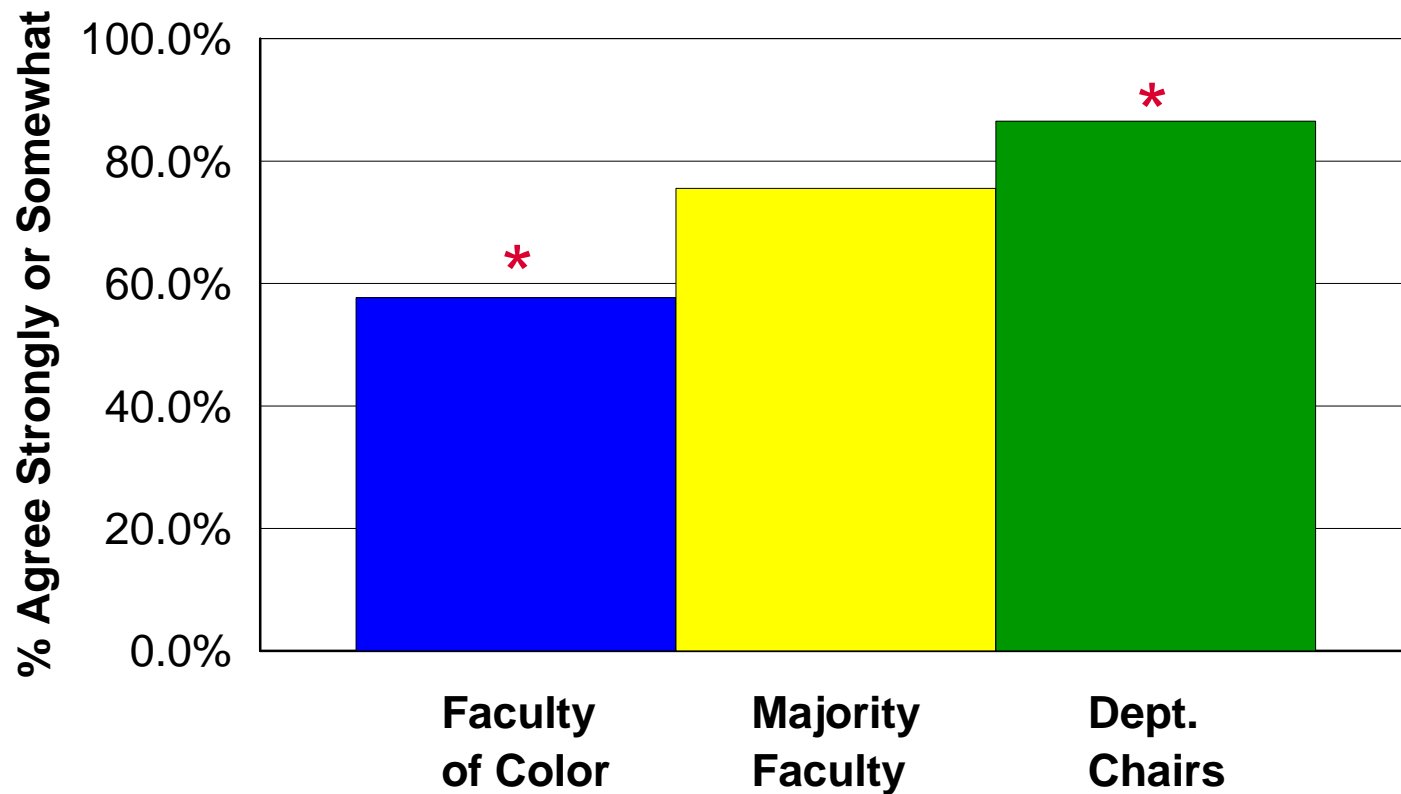
Departmental Decision-Making



The climate for women in my department is good



The climate for faculty of color in my department is good





Additional Evidence

- “There are some departments here where you may have a chair who is actively antagonistic towards women, who does not have any tolerance for flexibility of schedule, who is not willing to say ‘Well we know you get your work done, and so if you’re in here on Saturday and Sunday, but you have to be out on Tuesday and Wednesday, that’s okay.’ Instead they say, ‘No, you be here, our hours are from 8 to 4:30, and you be here from 8 to 4:30 every day.’”



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.”



Climate Workshops for Department Chairs

- 3-session workshop series
- Small (4-6) group of department chairs *from different schools/colleges*
- Session 1: What is climate? How does it manifest in your department?
- Session 2: Confidential report of climate survey results
- Session 3: What did you change and how did it work?



Climate Workshops for Department Chairs

- Features:
 - Work with CHAIRS to affect departmental climate change
 - Use ACTIVE LEARNING/PEER LEARNING techniques to engage with chairs
 - Provide the chairs DATA on their own units to change assumptions/perceptions
 - Use measurement as an intervention in itself



Other ADVANCE approaches to improving departmental climate

- Hire consultants to work closely/in-depth with entire department
 - University of Washington, Utah State
- CRLT Players
 - University of Michigan
- Work closely with department chairs to improve climate
 - University of Rhode Island, UW-Madison
- Small grants to departments to improve climate
 - University of Michigan, University of Washington, Case Western



Other ADVANCE approaches to improving departmental climate

- **Climate Surveys**
 - Georgia Tech, Utah State, UTEP, University of Michigan, UAB, University of Wisconsin-Madison, UC-Irvine, Columbia, University of Montana, URI, Virginia Tech
- **Leadership workshops for department chairs/coaching of department chairs**
 - UC-Boulder, Washington, NMSU, Georgia Tech, Case Western, URI



Results—is it working?

- Coverage—number of departments affected
 - ~1/3 of STEM departments at UW-Madison
- Documented changes
 - New spaces, inviting staff/student representatives to faculty meetings, mentoring, more communication, etc.
- Formative evaluation results
- *Future climate survey results*



Sustainability of climate change

- Sustainability of programs/initiatives
- Sustainability of results
 - Chairs change!



Other WISELI Initiatives

- Workshops for Search Committee Chairs
 - Plus, “Searching for Excellence & Diversity: Implementing Training for Search Committees”
- Vilas Life Cycle Professorships
- Celebrating Women in Science & Engineering Grants
- WISELI Seminar Series
- Senior Women’s Leadership
- Documentary Video



Other WISELI Research

- In-depth interviews
- Faculty climate surveys
- Academic staff climate survey
- Ethnographic study of gendered interactions in the laboratory
- Linguist studying gendered use of language in committee meetings
- Study of gender differences in patent declarations
- “Why Women Leave”
- Evaluation of major campus gender equity programs and policies



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