

The background of the slide is a collage of various wooden blocks and gears in different colors including orange, red, blue, and natural wood. A large, semi-transparent reddish-brown oval is centered over the image, containing the main title and subtitle.

Using Deliberative Dialogues to Improve Representation of Female and Underrepresented Minority Faculty

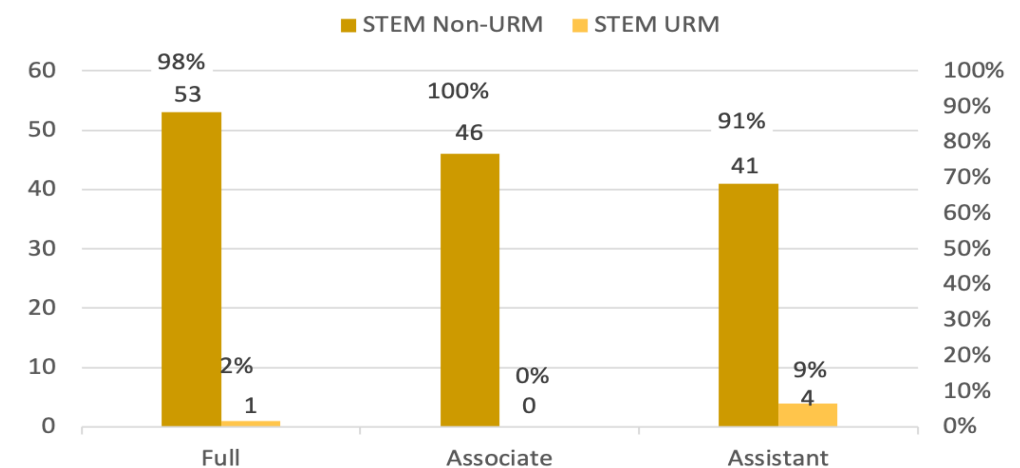
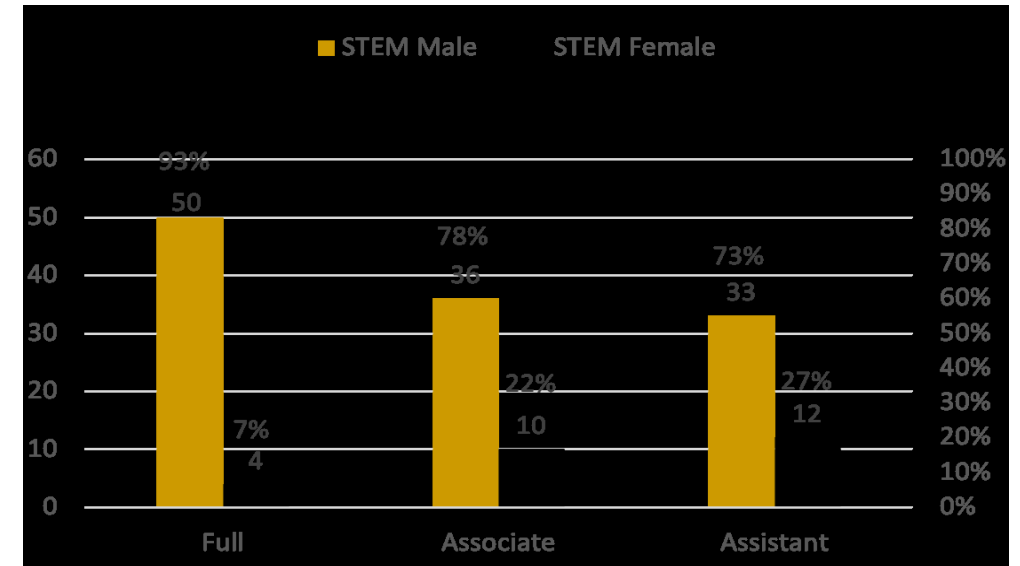
Part of an NSF ADVANCE Catalyst project to improve representation of women and underrepresented minority STEM faculty at Wichita State University

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SPSSI Conference 2021

Introduction

- The goal of this project is to create a strategic plan to improve opportunities and experiences for female and underrepresented minority STEM faculty at WSU
- Females and underrepresented minorities are a smaller percentage of faculty at WSU than expected when compared with peer institutions
- Females and underrepresented minorities make up a small part of the STEM faculty at WSU



Goals of Deliberative Dialogues

01

Increase understanding of DEI among STEM faculty chairs and associate deans

02

Provide opportunity for discussion of issues related to DEI

03

Discuss research and strategies to improve DEI

Deliberative Dialogue Process

- Seven 1-hour meetings across the Fall 2020 semester via Zoom
 - Introduction and debrief sessions
 - Six chapter discussions (2, 5 to 9)
 - Brief summary of book chapter provided by a CoPI from Stewart and Varian's *An Inclusive Academy: Achieving Diversity and Excellence*
 - Divided participants into small groups to discuss problem specific to chapter (Recruitment, evaluation of candidates, retention, facilitating success)
 - Answered questions during one hour meetings
 - What's happening?
 - What have you tried?
 - What are the challenges?
 - What do you think we should do to overcome these challenges?

Who are the participants?

- Engineering Technology
- Chemistry
- Biological Sciences
- Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering
- Real Estate and Finance
- Mathematics and Statistics
- Aerospace Engineering
- Geology
- Mechanical Engineering
- School of Computing

Attendance

- Invited a total of 15 chairs and associate deans
- Eight (53%) regularly attended (5 or 6 meetings)
- Regular attendees participated in the entire 60min discussion

Pre-Survey Open Ended Responses

- Want to gain from deliberative dialogues
 - Approaches for creating an inviting an inclusive department
 - Identify causes of problems related to DEI
 - Strategies for diversity hiring
 - Learn best practices
- Greatest concern for participating
 - May not provide practical solutions, or contribute meaningfully
 - Say something insensitive
 - Discomfort with personal identity when discussing diversity

Post-Survey Open Ended Responses

- Commitment to improve DEI
 - Focused recruitment and targeted applications
 - Communication with faculty throughout tenure process
 - Increase dialogue about importance of hiring and promoting diversity
- Gains from participation
 - Ideas to be proactive toward diversity
 - Understanding of other perspectives
 - Awareness of URM disadvantages
 - Encouragement
 - Broadened appreciation for importance of diversity, practicing good communication, and transparency

Post Dialogue Survey

- N=17
- Survey used a Likert scale ranging from 1-5 with 1 = not effective and 5 = extremely effective
- Deliberative dialogues provided an opportunity to think about diversity and inclusion related to chair position (M=4.13)
- Deliberative dialogues provided an effective format for discussing diversity and inclusion (M=4.33)
- Deliberative dialogues provided useful information to make changes that promote diversity and inclusion (M=3.83)
- Satisfaction with deliberative dialogue process (M=3.86)

Discussion Themes

- Discussions resulted in three main themes
 - Increasing Diversity
 - Departmental Concerns
 - Mentoring
- Themes are reported based on the challenges and recommendations

Increasing Diversity

- Challenges

- “Rainy day” item
- Resources
- High demand of diverse faculty
- Decades of same ethnicity and gender in field
- University processes
- Reliance on proxies for judging candidates

- Recommendations

- Support women earlier
- Diversity consultants
- Developed, defined, and consistent evaluation criteria
- Closer connection with local community
- Advertise family-friendly practices
- Active recruitment
- Clear guidelines and training for search committees, and interviewers
- Build an understanding of positive aspects of DEI

Departmental Concerns

- Challenges

- Department climate-ingrained department bias
- Perception of bias against highly represented groups
- Burden for minorities to act as “diversity coaches”
- Lack of communication and transparency
- Tokenism vs. Promotion
- Unintentional discrimination/offenses
- Barriers in communication
- Finding the starting point
- Faculty workshop attendance

- Recommendations

- Standard for assessing diversity in departments
- Female leadership roles
- Provide department diversity statement
- Maintain relationships and 2-way communication- one-on-one meetings with faculty
- Clear expectations identified in interview, and reviews
- Easily accessible and clear policies, expectations, and resources
- Survey faculty for sense of climate, and issues of concern
- Assess workshop interest through surveys

Mentoring

- Challenges

- Difficulty finding willing and helpful mentors
- Mentees admitting, they need help
- Cultural barriers to trust-building
- Matching Mentors and Mentee

- Recommendations

- Formal college-based mentoring program
- Training and guidance for mentors
- Informal mentoring and relationship building opportunities
- Circle of mentors
- Incentives for mentoring programs

Discussion

- The deliberative dialogue process needs time
- Outcomes of the discussions are needed in order to incorporate ideas into practices
- In addressing DEI issues at a department level, it is necessary to address perceptions and beliefs related to diversity
- There was difficulty in thinking about looking to the future while dealing with the current **global** events
- Department chairs have ideas for improving DEI in their departments but feel stuck by problems like time, money, climate within their department, hiring processes, and lack of diversity in some fields
- Discomfort with discussing DEI related issues needs to be improved at chair and department levels

References

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This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant #1937921. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.