UNC Charlotte ADVANCE
Institutional Transformation for the Future of the Faculty

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“Mid-career Mentoring: Giving Women What They Need”

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Mid Career Mentoring Study

• Project Goals:
  – Identify barriers women face in moving from Associate to Full Professor
  – Develop targeted strategies based on these barriers and what women say they would find most helpful and most likely to utilize/participate in
  – Ultimately, increase promotion rates for STEM women Associates
Research Methodology: Focus Groups

- All 37 women Associates in STEM departments invited to participate in one of 10 focus groups
- 20 women participated and one was interviewed individually
- One co-presenter led the discussion and another took notes
- Semi-structured protocol was followed for all sessions
Research Methodology: Survey 1

• Administered via email by RA who ensured confidentiality of responses
• 16 of 37 were completed and returned (45% response rate)
• Extended focus groups and tapped into factors related to promotion such as
  – Clarity of promotion criteria
  – Fairness of promotion process
  – Performance feedback
  – Service and administrative demands
Results: Focus Groups

- Thematic analysis of focus groups revealed the following themes as barriers to promotion
  - Lack of transparency in promotion criteria
  - Confusion over definition of scholarship
  - Disproportionate service demands (compared to male colleagues and compared to Assistants and Fulls)
  - Gender bias
  - Bias related to rank
Results:
Survey 1

• Understand College Criteria for promotion
  – Yes= 9      No = 6

• Have received regular feedback/guidance from Chair about progress toward Full
  – Yes=5      No= 11

• Feel that service demands (including administrative duties) have interfered with your progress toward Full
  – Yes=5      No= 10
Results:
Survey 1

• Feel there are gender disparities in service and/or teaching
  – Yes=4  No=9  Other=3

• Feel that promotion decisions are made fairly and without regard to gender, race, ethnicity
  • Yes=10  No=5

• Do you know how to devise an effective plan to go up for Full?
  – Yes=8  No=8
Follow-up Survey

• From the focus group results, the researchers made a list of 9 possible strategies that might be part of an ADVANCE mid-career mentoring initiative
• Electronic survey was sent to all 37 women by RA following the focus groups
• 16 completed surveys were received
Follow-up Survey Results

• Top Ranked Initiatives
  – 1st- Fellowship for Mid-career women similar to the Bonnie Cone ADVANCE Award that currently goes primarily to junior women
  – 2nd- Creation of Campus Ombudsperson
  – 3rd- Peer Circles (regular, infrequent meetings of women Associates to network, share experiences)
  – 4th- Support of Off-campus training / workshops
Follow-up Survey Results

• Unpopular (low-rated) strategies:
  – Social events for interacting with other mid-career women in STEM
  – Small groups of female Associates meet with Full professor for peer mentoring
  – Small groups of female Associates meet with external mentor for career coaching/planning
  – Training/ workshops on campus
Next Steps

• Plan to implement top-ranked strategies Fall 2008
• ADVANCE Leadership Team has already approved re-allocation of ADVANCE grant fund to support the Mid-Career Fellowship Awards- will write solicitation to cover research and also external training
• Future of the Faculty (ADVANCE policy initiative) is working on the creation of an Ombudsperson
• Will solicit more input from mid-career women to implement Peer Circles in a way that best fits their needs- implement first Circle mid-Fall 08