The University of Montana’s Partnership for Comprehensive Equity (PACE)

Goal  To develop a model for lasting institutional change in rural public universities and to promote quality through diversity. Specific goals include changing policy, increasing the number of tenure-line women science faculty, empowering and informing women faculty, and creating a statewide network of women scientists.

Constituents  Thirteen departments: Biology; Biomedical & Pharmaceutical Sciences; Chemistry; Computer Science; Economics; Ecosystems & Conservation Sciences; Forest Management; Society & Conservation; Geography; Geosciences; Mathematics; Physics & Astronomy; and Psychology.

Award  NSF granted the University of Montana a $3.5 million, five-year ADVANCE award in 2003.

Initiatives  PACE activities are described by component below.

Policy Development
- PACE PI serves as Special Assistant to the Provost for Comprehensive Equity.
- PACE Campus-Wide Policy Committee researched and drafted work-life policies and continues to review departmental diversity plans.
- The University Task Force on Policy Development and Revision produced a report with 17 policy recommendations. PACE is working to implement these proposals.
- Each science department is producing a diversity plan, describing methods for achieving gender equity and promoting diversity among students and faculty.

Recruitment
- PACE funds were used to support three new lines and to provide ‘top up’ salary for three more women. Additional hiring was supported by a ‘Two-for-One’ hiring practice, an initiative to expand hiring when candidates enhance the diversity of a department.
- PACE developed materials for search committees and chairs on recruiting and interviewing.
- The PACE Recruitment Director meets with every female job candidate and many spouses/partners to discuss topics that are difficult to address with search committees.

Retention
- PACE staff regularly meet with department faculty and chairs to discuss retention issues.
- PACE monitors the mentoring of pre-tenure faculty in the sciences.
- Women in Science events promote women’s research and facilitate networking.
- Work/Writing Groups allow junior and senior faculty to work together off-site for 2-3 days to complete research and writing projects.
- The Visiting Scholar/Mentor program enables tenure-track faculty to conduct an exchange with leading scholars from other universities.
- The University has institutionalized the PACE award for faculty mentoring campus-wide.
Outreach

- Talking Circles are meetings of American Indian women scientists from different tribes. Through Talking Circles and Workshops, PACE is exploring the barriers to engagement for native women in science and strategies for improving native women’s access to science.
- PACE initiated the American Indian Visiting Scholars Program at UM.
- A new office at UM, Research Opportunities in Science for Native Americans (ROSNA), is overseen by the PACE Outreach Director.
- PACE is developing a directory of American Indian scientists to facilitate networking.
- PACE created a set of electronic resources for native women scientists.

Assessment

- The PACE External Advisory Committee is comprised of prominent women scientists from across the U.S. who meet annually to provide guidance to PACE.
- The Evaluation Center at Western Michigan University is the external evaluator for PACE.
- Dr. James Hirstein of the UM Department of Mathematics analyzes the NSF Toolkit data.
- Dr. Chris Fiore and Joanna Legerski are conducting a climate survey and interviewing current faculty and faculty who have retired, resigned, or turned down jobs at UM.

Selected Results

- PACE initially proposed to partially fund three new tenure-track science faculty. Through a variety of mechanisms, PACE helped achieve ten new female faculty hires and one African American male hire. Hiring rates for women science faculty increased from 23% in 2001-2002 and 14% in 2002-2003 to 41% in 2003-2004 and 67% in 2004-2005 under PACE policies.
- Outreach to American Indian women in science has been institutionalized at UM through the development of the Research Opportunities in Science for Native Americans (ROSNA) office.
- PACE catalyzed the formation of the Presidential Task Force on Policy Development and Revision and has helped implement many of its recommendations.
- Science deans agreed to help support the Visiting Scholar/Mentor program and the PACE-initiated mentoring award was institutionalized.
- PACE has used its assessment results to leverage policy change campus-wide.

Products

PACE products include four PowerPoint search committee modules; three recruitment pamphlets (Recruitment vs. Evaluation; Evaluating the Applicant Pool; & Handling the Campus Visit); the PACE website; resources for native women scientists posted on the American Indian Higher Education Consortium website; and I. PrettyPaint (2007), In Our Mother’s Voice: Cultural Commentary by (Lawrence Earlbaum & Assoc., In Press).

Staff

Principal Investigator: Penelope F. Kukuk, Division of Biological Sciences
Co-PIs: Diana I. Lurie, Biomedical & Pharmaceutical Sciences (Recruitment); Daniel H. Pletscher, College of Forestry & Conservation (Retention)
Senior Personnel: Christine Fiore, Psychology (Assessment); James J. Hirstein, Mathematics (Assessment); Iris PrettyPaint, ROSNA (Outreach)
Program Staff: Amy F. Kinch, Program Manager (Policy); Joanna Legerski, Research Assistant (Assessment); Linda Mauer, Cross Program Coordinator

Contact

Project PACE; The University of Montana; 32 Campus Drive #4824; Missoula, MT 59812; Phone: 406.243.7223; Fax: 406.243.5858; Email: PACE@mso.umt.edu; Website: http://www.umt.edu/pace