

Integrating Research and Practices Georgia Tech ADVANCE

Mary Frank Fox, Co-Principal Investigator

The Georgia Tech (GT) ADVANCE Program takes an integrated institutional approach to organizational factors that support positive outcomes—and best practices—among faculty in academic science and engineering. The GT ADVANCE Research Program is tied to this approach—research findings help inform and structure practices to support sustained participation, performance, and advancement of faculty.

Findings of the GT ADVANCE research program and GT ADVANCE practices are integrated in these key, illustrative ways:

1. Importance of Grants Awarded for Advancement

Research finding: Faculty report that “grants awarded” are the most important criterion in promotion.

Practices to make success in obtaining grants more transparent for all include: 1) Cross-College Grants Workshop held with NSF Program Officer (2003); 2) Grants Workshops held in Ivan Allen College, co-sponsored with IAC-ADVANCE Professor (2004, 2005); 3) Presentation and discussion with Vice Provost for Research on Requests for Proposals for “Interdisciplinary Grants,” resulting also in posting of these requests on website.

2. The Nature of Tenure and Promotion Processes -- Integral to Advancement

Research findings: Faculty report that processes of evaluation are “moderately clear.” However, interviews with women faculty reveal that the “means” for advancement to full—compared to associate—professor are less known, less understood, and experienced as somewhat beyond “control” of faculty. Prior research indicates that equity in evaluation is supported by open and clear processes.

Practices include: 1) GT Promotion and Tenure Advancement Committee (PTAC) and Report (2003); 2) Awareness of Decisions in Evaluation of Promotion and Decision Making (ADEPT) interactive, computer instrument to heighten awareness of—and reduce bias in—evaluation (2003-present); 3) Career coaching sessions held in College of Engineering and at GT ADVANCE Conference (2005), bringing together faculty who have served on tenure and promotion committees to review vitae of interested women faculty (each faculty receives input from 4-5 coaches).

3. Work Environments including: Issue of Speaking About Research

Research finding: Women are less likely than men to speak frequently (daily) with faculty in home units about research. This is important because prior research shows that face-to-face discussion about research helps to generate and support research activity.

Practices include: Finding highlighted at GT ADVANCE Conferences and discussed/addressed in break-out groups among faculty and administrators (chairs).

4. Work-Family Arrangements – Important to Participation and Advancement

Research Findings: Women faculty are more likely than men to report that “family interferes with work,” and that their work is affected by childcare options.

Practices: Strengthened family-friendly practices in 1) active-services modified duties to enable flexible work schedules and teaching-release; 2) Day Care Center Opened (2002); 3) three Nursing Moms Stations created on campus.

5. Participation in “Decision-Making” is a sensitive issue

Research finding: In interviews, women faculty report that participation in decision making is an area fraught with “tension and stress.”

Practices to open pathways to decision making for those interested include: Workshops/presentations on women in higher education administration (2004, 2005).