



# Boston University NSF ADVANCE PAID Initiative

## WIN: Women in Networks, Building Community and Gaining Voice

Boston University's WIN initiative was designed to:

- ▶ enhance the professional networks of women faculty scientists and engineers
- ▶ increase the work satisfaction, retention, and advancement of women faculty in the sciences and engineering at Boston University
- ▶ analyze the ways in which network-building can contribute to women's satisfaction and success in academic science and engineering.

Leadership Team: Deborah Belle (Psychology) Sheryl Grace (Mechanical Engineering)  
Program Coordinator: Khalima Bolden Research Assistant: Lauren Groves  
Benchmark Data Analyst: Carol Neidle (Linguistics and Romance Languages)

### Program Activities

#### Pre-tenure mentoring Panel Discussion and Pair Matches

- ▶ Brings together tenure-track STEM faculty with senior faculty members who have recently served on tenure and promotion committees
- ▶ Provides career guidance and enhances networks of pre-tenure faculty.
- ▶ Half of all eligible junior STEM faculty members participated last year.
- ▶ Virtually all participants assessed the events as extremely valuable.

#### Networking receptions for new faculty

- ▶ Receptions hosted for the 9 newly hired STEM faculty (5 men, 4 women)
- ▶ All STEM faculty invited
- ▶ New faculty encouraged to invite Boston-area colleagues and potential colleagues
- ▶ Receptions well-attended by senior BU administrators
- ▶ Faculty attendance was poor
- ▶ Evaluations mixed, with many mentions of the poor attendance
- ▶ Reception this year will be held at the President's house to signal its importance.
- ▶ Reception this year will be held during spring semester when there are fewer competing events

#### Sponsored Colloquia

- ▶ Women in Industry colloquia bring women scientists and engineers in non-academic careers to Boston University
- ▶ Women of ADVANCE colloquia bring female faculty who are active with ADVANCE programs at their home institutions
- ▶ All research colloquia take place as part of an ongoing series within a college, department, or research center
- ▶ Only one colloquia took place during academic year 2008-2009, but others have been scheduled for academic year 2009-2010.

#### Erskine Grants

- ▶ Designed to enhance the research and professional networks of women faculty members.
- ▶ Applicants must be female faculty members with tenured or tenure track appointments in science or engineering.
- ▶ Type I Awards are small (up to \$3000) and quickly available sums of money designed to cover expenses such as travel, conference fees, child care, and hosting collaborators. Proposals for these awards are accepted on a rolling basis.
- ▶ Type II Awards are larger (up to \$20,000) intended to seed new areas of research and foster new collaborations. The funds can be used for equipment, graduate student support, partial teaching release time, summer salary, travel to research sites, specialized child care to permit research activities, etc.
- ▶ Awards named in memory of Professor Mary Erskine, a long time member of Boston University's Biology Department and a founding member of the Women in Biology program at BU. She played a crucial role in the creation of BU WISE.
- ▶ Thirteen Type II Award applications were received and were reviewed by a panel of senior faculty members in the sciences and engineering using a review procedure modeled on NSF research proposal reviews.
- ▶ All faculty members who did not receive funding were given feedback about the strengths and weaknesses of their proposals and many were encouraged to revise their proposals accordingly and to apply again.

### Studying Faculty Networks

#### Faculty Network Survey

- ▶ Full-time faculty were invited to participate in a web-based survey concerning their professional networks.
- ▶ Questions covered network ties within the department, outside the department but within Boston University, and beyond Boston University.
- ▶ The survey was designed to take no more than 15-20 minutes.
- ▶ Confidentiality was protected, and all survey procedures and questions were reviewed by the Charles River Campus Institutional Review Board.
- ▶ The survey achieved an acceptable overall participation rate of 52%.

Analyses have focused on tenured and tenure-track faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) and the College of Engineering (ENG)

These participants included:

- ▶ 39 STEM women (participation rate=72%)
- ▶ 102 STEM men (participate rate=36%)
- ▶ 45 non-STEM women (participation rate=54%)
- ▶ 61 non-STEM men (participation rate=38%)

#### Findings

##### Among full professors in STEM departments:

- ▶ Men's professional networks outside the university were more densely interconnected. More of these network members knew each other.
- ▶ Women felt more isolated or alienated from colleagues in their own departments.
- ▶ Women believed more strongly that the quality of their scholarship was positively affected by interactions with BU colleagues.
- ▶ Men listed more male departmental colleagues as network members.
- ▶ Women listed more individuals at Boston University beyond their own departments who made them feel valued as colleagues.
- ▶ Women listed more women outside Boston University as network members than did men, and women listed more women colleagues at Boston University but outside their own departments than did men.

##### Among associate professors in STEM departments:

- ▶ Men were more satisfied with opportunities to collaborate with departmental colleagues.
- ▶ Men more often felt they had a voice in the decision-making that affects the direction of the University.
- ▶ Men felt more well informed about what goes on at Boston University
- ▶ Women listed more female network members from beyond Boston University.
- ▶ Women named more individuals within their departments who serve as sources of professional advice, and more individuals who serve as models of professional success.

##### Among assistant professors in STEM departments:

- ▶ Women more often felt excluded from an informal network in their department.
- ▶ Women listed more female network members from beyond Boston University.