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# ADVANCE

AT UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY



The ADVANCE Newsletter for USU Faculty

Spring 2006, Issue No. 2

## ADVANCE at Utah State University

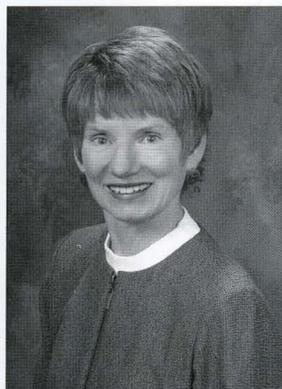
Can workplace environment serve to enhance or detract from faculty effectiveness? Empirical evidence provides a definitive answer of YES! to this question. Previous research suggests that ineffective and unwelcoming workplaces are particularly detrimental for women. To this end, improving the workplace environment should bring benefits to all faculty, especially women faculty. The ADVANCE program at USU seeks to foster a workplace environment that increases both faculty effectiveness and gender equity. The overarching aim is to improve the recruitment and retention of women faculty in the colleges of Science, Engineering, Agriculture, and Natural Resources. Among the goals of ADVANCE are to increase the transparency of the system, improve department climate, increase research connections among faculty, and enhance work-life integration. The research of ADVANCE on faculty recruitment and retention will lead to policy changes that help faculty members achieve career success and satisfaction. To date, USU is one of only 19 institutions to be awarded an ADVANCE grant to bring about institutional change to improve academia for faculty. At the half way point, ADVANCE at USU is able to look back upon many successes and we look forward to many more. So far, we have facilitated department transformations for 3 departments, worked to improve policies, assisted in negotiating formal procedures for dual career accommodation, provided a variety of research and leadership seminars, offered mediation training, funded seed grants for collaborative research and provided department head workshops. New projects include a theatre project that will highlight in a dynamic way the subtle gender biases that women encounter and assistant professor lunches with invited guest speakers to increase the transparency of the system.



Ronda Callister  
Principal  
Investigator



Christine Hailey  
Co-Principal  
Investigator



Christine Hult  
Acting Principal  
Investigator



Robert Schmidt  
Co-Principal  
Investigator



Kim Sullivan  
Co-Principal  
Investigator



Virginia Valian  
Photo by Frank Fournier

## Virginia Valian, PhD Visits Utah State University November 1, 2005

Dr. Virginia Valian is a Distinguished Professor of Psychology at Hunter College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY). A noted gender and career development expert, Dr. Valian is a cognitive scientist whose research ranges from first and second language acquisition to gender equity. In her book *Why So Slow? The Advancement of Women*, Dr. Valian examined why there are so few women at the top levels in the professional world.

Dr. Valian's visit to USU included the keynote address at the USU Diversity Awards and speeches given to the STEM deans and department heads and the Campus Climate for Women. A consistent theme of her remarks is the importance of achieving gender equity in the professional world. The slower advancement of women, in all professions, including academia, is attributed to a variety of causes.

Chief among them, are subtle biases, called gender schemas, that overrate men and underrate women in professional settings. Many small biases accumulate over time resulting in the faster and easier advancement of men compared to women.

A key message of Dr. Valian is that successful change requires the recognition that there is no one-time solution. Change requires consistent effort. Policies and procedures need to be inspected for unintended biases. Leaders must continually exhibit a commitment to equity and diversity. A compelling rationale for change must be given by leaders, including increased grant possibilities, improved morale, and increased effectiveness. It is also helpful to inspect the institutional structure of academia for instances of where it might shortchange women. For example, searches often subtly favor men and start-up packages and initial salaries for women are sometimes lower. To bring about change, institutions must know their own data regarding the advancement of women and men. The cornerstone of Dr. Valian's message is that education and accountability are the keys to bringing about lasting change.

### ADVANCE Upcoming Events

- March 20 and 21: External Evaluation
- March 23: Department Head Workshop
- March 29: Environment and Society Department Retreat
- April 4: College of Science Assistant Professor Lunch
- April 14: Multi-PI Seed Grant Workshop
- April 15: Promotion Celebration

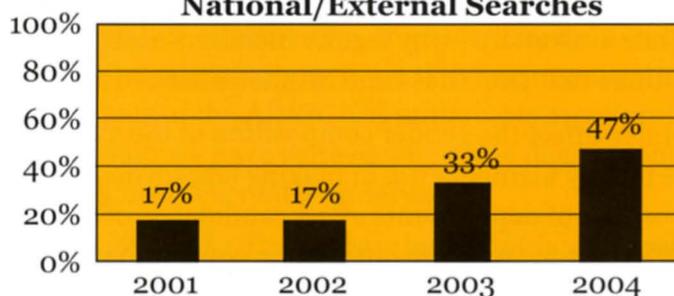
In the Future:

- Leadership Retreat
- Research Workshops

## The Science and Engineering Recruitment Team

New and innovative recruiting strategies are often needed to attract the most exceptional faculty members to USU. Doing the “same old thing” is often not enough to draw applications from the most stellar candidates. Some evidence suggests that outstanding women and minority candidates in particular are often recruited through nontraditional means. ADVANCE seeks to help place USU at the forefront in recruiting the best and the brightest. An integral asset in achieving this goal is the Science and Education Recruitment Team (SERT). SERT was formed to help bring the recruitment of women in science and engineering in line with available PhDs in these disciplines. SERT is a faculty based team with 12 members that collaborates with hiring committees to maximize the quality of potential hires. This is done through attracting a broad and diverse pool of qualified candidates. SERT provides information on a variety of hiring topics, including successful advertising strategies, objective decision-making tools, best practices for interviewing, and dual career policies. SERT can arrange for non-departmental contacts to meet with candidates to address questions about USU and to serve as “resource advisors” on search committees. Data show a distinct increase in the percentage of women candidates hired in the STEM fields, suggesting SERT is doing an outstanding job.

**Female STEM Tenure-Track Hires  
National/External Searches**



Pictured Left to Right: Terry Peak, Kelly Kopp, Joan McLean, Ryan Dupont, Robert Schmidt Not Pictured: Kelli Cargile Cook, James Evans, Ted Evans, and Nick Flann.

## New ADVANCE Programs

### Research on Hiring and Exiting

Dr. Christy Glass, a new Assistant Professor in the Sociology, Social Work, and Anthropology Department, is collaborating with our new Program Leader, Krista Lynn Minnotte, on a research project funded by ADVANCE. Dr. Glass joined the USU faculty in 2005 after completing her doctoral work at Yale University. Dr. Glass, a comparative sociologist, is an expert on gender inequality in work organizations and labor markets.



Krista Lynn Minnotte and Christy Glass

Over the past five years the research of Dr. Glass has centered mainly on exploring Central and Eastern Europe and Russia in the transition from state socialism to market capitalism. Her focus has been on examining gender inequalities in paid work during this transition.

Krista Lynn Minnotte joined the ADVANCE team in December of 2005 after earning her doctorate in Sociology from USU in 2004. Gender inequality is her area of expertise, with a focus on issues of work-life integration and workplace inequalities. Together Drs. Glass and Minnotte will examine two issues of crucial importance to Utah State University—why faculty members accept or decline job offers and why faculty members leave. Questions that Drs. Glass and Minnotte seek to address include:

- How do policies and procedures affect the gender composition of the applicant pool?
- What criteria do prospective faculty members use in making employment decisions?
- How does the gender composition of departments affect candidates' decisions?
- How do institutional commitments to work-life integration come into play?
- Do geographical concerns affect potential faculty decisions?
- Which factors are the most salient for job candidates?
- Why do faculty members leave USU?
- Are certain concerns more likely to emerge for female faculty versus male faculty?
- How often do dual-career accommodation issues come into play for exiting faculty?

Dr. Glass and Dr. Minnotte are in the formative stages of research and look forward to sharing their results with the campus community.

### ADVANCE Programs

- Department Transformation
- Administrator Leadership Training
- Faculty Career Workshops
- Dual Career Assistance
- Policy Code Review and Recommendations
- Climate Surveys & Data
- Recruiting - SERT
- Promoting Collaborative Research: Seed Grants

## Interactive Theatre

ADVANCE is excited to announce that we are creating a new theatre program to raise awareness of gender issues. We have hired Katie Langston who will work with other theatre professionals to create an interactive theatre experience that highlights the subtleties of gender bias. Katie Langston is a recent graduate of theatre at USU. She is currently working on the development of the script for the pilot presentation, which will address issues in the Tenure and Promotion process. The overall purpose of the program is to educate faculty, staff, and administration about existing issues in the academic climate and to provide a forum to discuss these issues. We have selected interactive plays because they create an environment conducive to learning and the discussion of controversial issues.



Katie Langston

## Department Transformation

One of the goals of ADVANCE at USU is to apply the “dual-agenda” business model to an academic setting. The basic idea of this model is that enhancing gender equity and work-life integration of employees brings about greater workplace effectiveness. Empirical studies of the business world have shown this is often the case. In fact, focusing on just effectiveness or gender equity in isolation can impede successful change. In academia, the most influential interactions affecting organizational climate occur at the department level. Hence, a major part of the ADVANCE initiative is an effort to improve department climates. With the help of a consultant we have worked with three departments to increase both effectiveness and gender equity. Another effort is currently underway.

How does department transformation work? The process begins with a presentation to the department. If the department remains interested and committed then a consultant interviews most of the faculty. The consultant asks about the department, including perceptions of the department’s strengths and weaknesses. After analyzing the data, the consultant presents the major themes at a department retreat. Then faculty brainstorm about ways to address the weaknesses of the department and to improve the department climate. Solutions are discussed, debated, and agreed on.

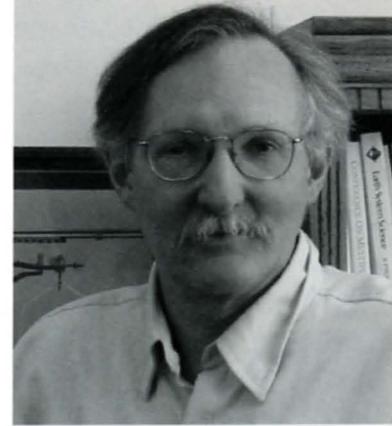
ADVANCE has learned:

- Faculty engagement results in important, insightful, and creative ideas.
- A retreat away from the department allows the time and energy to focus on improving work processes.
- A customized change effort generates enthusiasm.
- There is no “one size fits all” solution to departmental issues.
- Leaving the retreat with a plan and some commitments is helpful.
- Enthusiasm from the department head aids in change.

Specific Outcomes:

- To increase faculty interactions and sharing of research ideas in one department, ADVANCE helped fund the renovation of a room. This room provides an attractive meeting space for brown bag lunches, coffee hours, and informal discussions.
- For another department ADVANCE funded a facilitator to assist in the discussion of issues that because of their tendency to increase conflict had been tabled in the past.
- Seed grants were the tool for change in a third department. In this department, there were two primary areas of specialization whose connections were not readily apparent. ADVANCE funded cross-specialization seed grants to help foster collaboration among faculty members.

**Department Climate**  
Improving department climate can be a challenge. Dr. John Shervais department head of Geology advises that good mentors play an important role in facilitating a good department climate. Dr. Shervais also points to the crucial role played by hiring decisions. Good hiring decisions can go a long way toward building a collegial department. He credits the exceptional faculty in his department for bringing about the great climate that can be found in Geology. The ADVANCE library at Utah State University has books on department leadership that faculty may check out.



John Shervais

## A Special Thanks

The ADVANCE team at Utah State University extends warm thanks to Dr. Janet Osborne for her distinguished 27 years of service. Dr. Osborne, the Director of the Women's Center for Lifelong Learning, has provided leadership and tireless advocacy for women's issues. Her efforts championing women's rights have been invaluable to USU. Dr. Osborne's support of ADVANCE at USU has strengthened our programs and has even been instrumental in providing us with a new home on the third floor of the TSC alongside the Women's Center. ADVANCE owes her a tremendous debt of gratitude.



Janet Osborne

## VISIT ADVANCE!

<http://websites.usu.edu/advance>

*Get Helpful Information On:*

- Promotion & Tenure
- Teaching
- Running a Search Committee
- Negotiation
- Climate Survey Data
- Gender Issues



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