Texas Tech University
NSF-Partnership of Women in Engineering Research and Science

Mentoring Program

Big 12 Advance Conference

Lawrence Kansas 2010

National Science Foundation
ADVANCE-PAID Grant
Texas Tech University
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• One-on-one mentoring program for women faculty in Science and Engineering departments.
  – A chance to have a female mentor when one may not be available otherwise.
  – Chance to have a mentor outside of her department.
LIMITED INTEREST

- Only had 5 mentor/mentee pairs (out of 32 female faculty).
  - 1 mentee was an associate professor
  - 1 was a research professor.
  - 3 assistant professors.
- Most pairs only met once or twice for the duration of one semester only.
- One pair did not meet at all.
PROGRAM ADJUSTMENT

• We conducted a series of interviews about mentoring to see how we could adjust the program to elicit more interest.
  – Most felt they had enough opportunities for mentoring in previously established relationships.
  – Except for one woman, no preference for female mentors.
  – Fear of being perceived as weak and not a team player.
BROWN BAG MENTORING

• Created a brown bag mentoring program.
  – Colleagues spoke about specific career issues, lead discussion, answered questions and gave advice where appropriate.
  – Was more focused and targeted.
    • Topics included child care, tenure process, tips for grant proposal writing, being a dept. chair
  – Appealed to busy faculty who were juggling work and family.
  – Topics related to career rather than family were more popular.
IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE MENTORING PROGRAMS

• A supplemental mentoring program that gives women a chance to share information, wisdom and insights in a safe space.

• A chance to provide networking and additional career support that may not be available in other venues.

• Let participants determine how mentoring will be structured.