

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH FOR HORIZONTAL MENTORING ALLIANCES

Facilitating the advancement of senior women chemistry and physics faculty members at liberal arts institutions to the highest ranks of academic leadership

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Summary of Initiatives:

This project focuses on the distinctive environments of undergraduate liberal arts institutions and the challenges faced by senior women faculty on these campuses to attain leadership roles and professional recognition. Our project involves the formation of five-member alliances of senior women faculty members at different institutions for the purpose of “horizontal mentoring”. Three of the alliances focus on full professors in chemistry, the fourth involves full professors in physics. We have formed these alliances to test a “horizontal mentoring strategy” that aims to enhance the leadership, visibility, and recognition of participating faculty members. Alliance members participate in discussions, workshops, and activities focused on career and leadership development through (a) periodic gatherings of alliance members at various locations across the country, (b) the use of an online collaboration tool to promote electronic communication within each alliance and also to network the alliances to augment our peer-support structure with a larger cohort of senior women scientists, and (c) via videoconferencing provided through participation in the NITLE Multipoint Interactive Videoconference (MIV) Pilot Service. This NSF-ADVANCE-PAID project will identify and create resources that address career development issues for senior women at liberal arts institutions and disseminate best practices on horizontal mentoring strategies for academic women. We ultimately will share our findings from this project in a variety of venues, including a summit in the final year of the project. We are particularly interested in exploring how this mentoring strategy operates differently, and perhaps more effectively, for women from liberal arts colleges as compared to women faculty members at Ph.D.-granting institutions.