

Year 1 Public Description of Work for
Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Faculty Mentoring

This Action Applies to Rubric Item(s): Reducing Power Differentials (21)

The 2018 NASEM report recommends that academic institutions should consider power-diffusion mechanisms to reduce the risk of sexual harassment. Implementing this recommendation may include:

- Faculty Professional Development and Mentorship Programs to reduce power differentials between junior and senior faculty, such as programs and/or policies that facilitate skills development, cohort creation, and navigation of the promotion and advancement processes with peer and near-peer faculty members.

Description of Work:

The goal of this work is to support the professional development of new faculty. The work is 1) a reorganization within the Office of the Provost to create The Office of Faculty Development and 2) a process change: academic departments seeking permission from the provost to hire tenure track (TT) faculty must provide a departmental faculty mentoring plan with the requisition request.

The [Office of Faculty Development](#) (OFD) provides workshops, services and resources to faculty to form [peer mentoring networks](#) and [learn leadership skills](#) for both department heads and chairs and faculty interested in moving into leadership positions. The faculty union coordinates with the Office of the Provost on workshops for pre-tenure faculty about the tenure process and for tenured associate professors about the promotion process. UMass Amherst has an NSF [ADVANCE IT](#) award, with the goals of policy and culture change to achieve equity, inclusion, and success of women STEM faculty. The UMass ADVANCE IT project partners with OFD, colleges, and the faculty union in programming around faculty mentoring, cohort creation, equitable evaluation of faculty, and shared decision making in departments.

A 2019 OFD survey of TT faculty in their first and second years at UMass about their onboarding experience revealed disparities between men and women faculty with regard to access to mentoring and feeling connected to their departments. As of the 2019/2020 academic year, the provost instituted a policy change pertaining to the approval process for new TT faculty hires, specifically, that academic departments seeking permission to launch a search for a faculty hire would need to provide a faculty mentoring plan. OFD provides resources and programming for [faculty peer mentoring](#), and consults with departments on their mentoring plans. The UMass ADVANCE project has developed [best practices tools](#) for departments to consider in developing their faculty mentoring plans. Additionally, UMass Amherst is a [National Research Mentoring](#)

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Network (NRMN) campus. This evidence-based mentor training program focuses on faculty:graduate student and graduate student:undergraduate student mentor:mentee relationships. NRMN Master Facilitators have conducted mentor training at UMass Amherst, and the UMass Amherst Interim Graduate Dean is an NRMN Master Facilitator who trains other faculty on campus to be NRMN training facilitators. The Interim Grad Dean and UMass ADVANCE partnered to develop a NRMN-style training module for faculty mentoring faculty using publicly available materials from the [Center for Improvement of Mentored Experiences in Research](#) . Several faculty-mentoring-faculty training workshops were held over the 2019/2020 academic year and are planned for the duration of the ADVANCE project. Also this year, UMass ADVANCE partnered with colleges to reward and recognize faculty members who mentor faculty with the first annual [ADVANCE College Faculty Mentoring Award](#) for 2020.

Assessment includes OFD onboarding surveys, and the campus is partnering with the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE), a research initiative based at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, in two studies. Faculty were surveyed in 2020. Additionally, the UMass ADVANCE project administered a baseline survey of faculty in 2018, the analysis of which is informing interventions and programming . A follow-up survey will be administered in 2023.

Response to COVID-19: The provost has established an opt-out tenure year decision delay of one year for all pre-tenure faculty, suspended the collection of Student Responses to Instruction for the spring 2020 semester (in which the campus had to transition to fully remote teaching over the Spring Break recess), has modified the Annual Faculty Reports template to include a statement from faculty on the impact of the pandemic on their research, teaching and service, and is developing language for solicitation letters to external reviewers in promotion cases that prompt them to consider the impact the pandemic disruptions on faculty productivity

Website for further information (if applicable): <https://www.umass.edu/faculty-development/>,
<https://www.umass.edu/advance/home>

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