

**Institutional Mechanisms for Breaking the ‘Glass Ceiling’:
Gender, Race, and Associate Professors**

**Report of 2017 CLA Dean’s Faculty Fellow Project
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Women have earned half or more of all doctoral degrees for almost a decade but few hold tenured or leadership positions in academia (Johnson 2017). As per the latest numbers available, in fall 2013, women made up almost 49% of all full time instructional faculty in degree granting institutions in the US, but only 31% are full professors.¹ In 2014, male faculty members held a higher percentage of tenured positions at every type of institution even though they did not hold the highest number of faculty positions at every rank (Johnson 2017). At Purdue, as of 2017, less than 20% of full professors are women and less than 26% of tenured faculty are women; much lower than the national average.² These statistics clearly point to the gender differences in the success of women in higher education.

Recognition of knowledge and competence are hallmarks of status in professions. Studies have shown that gender is central to assigning status within organizations (Acker 1990; Ridgeway 1997; Williams 2013). Moreover, relations of gender recognize some types of work and knowledge over others. Gendered forms of recognition have implications for who is rewarded and how power is structured. For instance, in the academy women's success is often attributed to luck or affirmative action. Such attribution adversely affects the recognition of women's accomplishments and is particularly the case at the associate rank. Women at the associate rank can get close enough to the 'glass ceiling' but few can break through the seemingly invisible barrier that excludes them. Though women have moved into academic positions in universities in increasing numbers over the past few decades, they are still under represented at the highest rank, that of full professor. How can we break down the barriers that women face at this level?

The main goal of the proposed project was to consider specific mechanisms for recognition of the excellence of associate professors in the College of Liberal Arts (CLA). It is expected that institutional mechanisms identified through this project will lead to models of best practices that will be useful for CLA and may also facilitate retention of both women and faculty of color. One plausible reason for the lack of representation of women among full professors, I note, is the lack of recognition of women's 'work,' particularly of associates. Moreover, I argue that recognition both internally (within the department, college, and university) and externally are critical for conveying the value of the contributions and successes of faculty.

What I did

This exploratory study comprised four parts. The first part involved 'taking stock.' In this part, I examined trends in promotion of associates (women and men). In the second part, I gathered information about the practices that two major universities had put in place to facilitate the recognition of mid-career/post-tenure faculty: Michigan State University and University of Nebraska.³ In the third part, I organized two main events: a meeting separately for assistant and associate professors in CLA to review promotion procedures and guidelines, and a panel of two invited speakers for a workshop for associates followed by presentations focused on recognition

¹ <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=61> accessed in November 2016.

https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_315.20.asp?current=yes accessed in April 2017. Faculty include professors, associate professors, assistant professors, instructors, lecturers, assisting professors, adjunct professors, and interim professors.

² Obtained from data available in Purdue Data Digest (accessed through www.purdue.edu)

³ Other universities may also have practices in place but these two were prominent when I searched for information.

of associates. In the fourth part, I conducted focus groups and in-depth interviews with associates in CLA.

Taking Stock

I began by seeking information about associates in CLA as they are the focus of this exploratory study. A complete department-wise list of associate professors in CLA as well as promotion trends were compiled with assistance of the Assistant to the Dean. The College had a total of 123 associates at the end of 2014 which reduced to 108 in January 2017. The trends in promotion from assistant to associate for the past ten years (2010-2017) show that fewer women than men were promoted and tenured during that time period. This may partly be a function of having fewer women assistants across those years. Over the past 10 years (2007-17), a total of 84 faculty members were promoted and tenured as associate professors. Almost 40% (n=33) of these were in the past 4 years. In the same period - past 4 years - 23 women (n=33) were tenured and promoted in CLA. Refer to figure 1.

Figure 1 Assistant to Associate Promotions in CLA

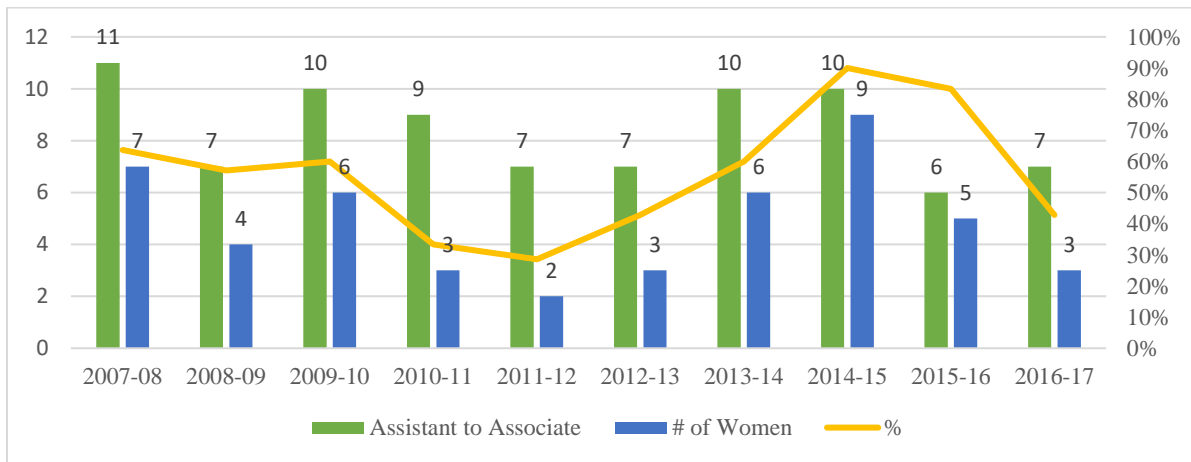
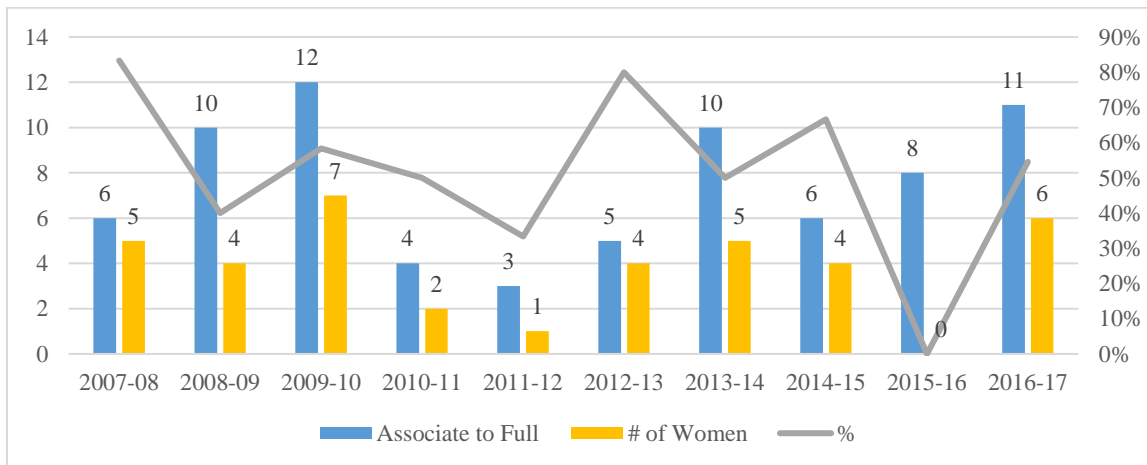


Figure 2 Associate to Full Professor Promotions in CLA



A total of 75 faculty members were promoted from associate to full professor in CLA over the 2007-2017 period of 10 years (this does not include any hires made at the full professor rank). Refer to figure 2. Almost 47% (n=35) of these promotions were in the past 4 years. In the past 4 years, 15 women (out of a total of 35) were promoted to the rank of full professor. This past year, 2016-17, 6 out of the total 11 promoted to full professor are women. And since 2010, this is the largest number of women promoted in a single year. This is a positive trend in promotions but most of the women promoted in the past four years, on an average, were in rank, for more years than were men. As noted below, the details about promotion trends were also discussed in the meetings organized in September 2017.

Practices at two other institutions

I reviewed best practices and other documents from Michigan State University and University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I also reviewed scholarly literature focused on associates, faculty workloads and service. The five main takeaway points from these documents are: supporting faculty advancement; ensure faculty participation in governance; the need for taking stock of the role and advancement of associates and offer faculty development programs; and consideration of mechanisms to foster diversity and limit bias.

Meetings/Workshop

In fall 2017, I suggested to the Dean's office to convene two meetings in September 2017 – one of assistants and one of associates – to share information about practices and procedures related to tenure and promotion. Some version of this has occurred in the past in CLA. I thought such a meeting should cover specific information so that faculty are aware of procedures and they can think about reaching out to heads and the Dean's office for support.

The agenda for the meeting organized in September 2017 was as follows: background details of trends in promotion and tenure in CLA; details of procedures and some college initiatives; and sharing of experiences by two invited faculty; one newly promoted assistant to associate and one recently promoted associate to full professor (Dr. David Atkinson from History and Dr. Michelle Buzon from Anthropology). Both, procedures and process that is the flow of a promotion case were outlined - department primary committee in September-October, college area committee in November, University Committee in February, and Board of Trustees in April. The role of department heads and procedures in the college area committee were outlined by the Dean. Ample time was set aside for Q&A which was handled by the Dean. The meetings were very well attended.

In addition, a one-day event for associates was organized in October 2017. A 90-minute workshop on 'post-tenure careers in CLA' was organized with two special faculty guests: Dr. Connie Hargrave from the University of Iowa and Dr. Linda Vo from the University of California, Irvine. This was followed by presentations by the two guest speakers (Hargrave and Vo) and preliminary findings from my project on a panel titled, Building Institutional Mechanisms for Post-Tenure Advancement. The workshop was based on guidelines created in discussion with the two guest speakers. The workshop was well-attended and well-received by faculty.

Video recordings of the September meetings and the October sessions have been made available to the CLA faculty through the faculty development webpage of the College This site contains videos and information from the September 6th and October 4th events. <https://www.cla.purdue.edu/facultyStaff/facultySupport/workshops.html>. Specific video

recordings are at: (a) workshop on Post Tenure Career October 4, 2017 Morning Session <https://youtu.be/CMNeDiQ541A> and (b) workshop on Post Tenure Career October 4, 2017 Afternoon Session <https://youtu.be/rRIHgohax8I>

Focus Groups and Open-ended Interviews

In the fourth part of the project, I relied on qualitative data to examine CLA associates' experiences of recognition of research, teaching, and service or engagement. Qualitative methods are most appropriate for addressing the topics of interest as they allow for flexibility to probe and provide greater depth of information. These methods also allow for gathering detailed information about the experiences of individuals within different social contexts in a way that surveys conventionally cannot (NSF Report 2007). Moreover, institutional issues related to challenges and barriers faced by women associates are less likely to be mentioned in public arenas making it vital to utilize the methods most likely to yield adequate and reliable data. Focus groups, however, produce unique data by encouraging participants to comment on one another's points of view and challenge each other's beliefs and motives (Kidd and Parshall 2000).

The qualitative data for this exploratory study are drawn from two focus group discussions (FGD) with associate professors and five individual level in-depth interviews to capture faculty satisfaction about recognition. I relied on a 2014 list of associate professors to purposively select participants. As noted above, the College had a total of 123 associates at the end of 2014 but it reduced to 108 in January 2017. The difference is possibly because of departures and promotions to the full professor rank. See table 1 for a comparison of the number of women and men associates in the College in 2014 and 2017.

Table 1: Total Associates in CLA

Year	Women	Men	Total
2014	55	68	123
2017	60	48	108

The 2014 list allowed me to include the perspective and experiences of those who had been recently promoted. The first FGD comprised nine women and the second comprised 5 women and one man. We contacted 32 women and men for the study and 17 declined because they were unable to fit the date and time of the FGD into their schedule (some were teaching during that time) and therefore opted for a one-on-one interview or simply did not provide a reason. Most men contacted declined or did not respond. I speculate that this was perhaps because the project was viewed as being about women's success although I posit that gender relations are about both men and women.

The total of 14 associates, as of 2014, who participated in the focus groups had been in rank anywhere between 1 and 18 years and represented 9 different disciplines in the College (CLA has eleven departments). While the number of women and men associates in rank for more than 7 years was close, there was a visible difference in the number of women versus men in rank for 6 years or less. Refer to table 2. This is particularly important to note as the College (and departments and the university) will have to be attentive to facilitate the success of the almost double the number of women, compared to men, at the associate rank. Five associates opted to participate in in-depth interviews; two of the five had also participated in the FGDs.

Approval of Purdue’s Institutional Regulatory Board (IRB) was obtained to conduct the study – FGDs and individual level or one-on-one in-depth interviews. As approved by IRB, we (my graduate research assistant and I) utilized an information sheet to inform participants about the study and our assurance to maintain anonymity. Accordingly, no identifiers were retained in the transcripts of the FGDs and the audio recording was erased soon after transcription was completed.

Table 2: Years in Rank of Associates in CLA in 2014

Years in Rank (#)	Women	Men	Total
1-6 years	35	19	54
> 7 years	31	38	69

The FGDs and in-depth interviews were intended to capture variations in thinking about the means and ways of recognition of the work of associates (research, teaching and service) besides promotion but will be important for promotion. The FGDs were also intended to be mechanisms for change rather than discussing only problems.

Analysis and Key Findings⁴

My graduate student research assistant (also included in the IRB application) coded the data from the focus groups and interviews using grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Charmaz 2006). We initially performed open coding, searching the data for major patterns. This resulted in nine initial codes: getting recognized takes extra work, gender inequality in recognition, not enough recognition for service, associates expected to ‘give back’ to university with nothing in return, recognition of teaching uneven/unfair, research the exclusive path to promotion without consideration of contribution to leadership/governance, emotional labor not rewarded, importance of ‘big ticket’ recognition, and ‘deafening silence’ of post-tenure. We then collapsed codes and defined four main themes: contribution to governance and leadership; support of associates receiving fellowship; gender disparity in salaries; and concerns about what to do to be promoted. Below I briefly discuss each of these themes.

Contribution to Governance & Role of Leadership (associates)

A major theme in the FGDs and interviews was the concern with the recognition of contributions to governance (or what is referred to as service or engagement). Three main points embedded in this theme are: dismissal of contributions to governance which become obstacles to promotion;

⁴ Some of these aspects were also raised by the working groups created by the Office of the Provost to develop recommendations based on the COACHE data analysis in 2016. For instance, the following were included in the summary in the then Provost’s December 2016 newsletter. (a) All three work groups reported major issues at the departmental level regarding transparency, resource allocation, service and teaching assignments, and gender and racial bias. (b) All three work groups reported that a lack of appreciation for the contributions of women, URM, and associate faculty was a common theme. (c) All three work groups defined problems related to promotion from associate to full professor including lack of clear guidelines, processes and timelines.

compensation for ‘high service’ work; and the gendered notions of governance work. Below are quotes illustrative of these concerns.

- “expected to ‘give back to the university’ without anything in return”
- “You can be a jerk and not contribute to the department and still get ahead if you publish... people were holding [NAME] up ... we poo-poo the fact that he doesn’t do the governance things”
- “I think it’s gendered [the ability to get by just doing research and not contributing to the department].
- That’s why guys tend to be promoted earlier. They do that kind of jerk-ster thing and then, they can do that because there is the whole cohort of women doing all this other [service]”
- “Not just that they do it, you are told and treated that it is okay. That guy is a jerk. He is doing his research. You are literally told that. I heard it.” (interviewee) “Now, try to be a woman and a jerk.”
- ‘High Service’ not always properly recognized or is viewed the same as easier forms of service
- “... to get time off from teaching, especially when you’re doing a huge service load, would really help. I know the Dean really cares about getting professors in the undergraduate classroom, and he doesn’t like to give the course releases out. He doesn’t like to give them out like candy. I feel like it’s not candy, its fair compensation. He’s never said that.”
- Contributions have not been about recognition but presenting obstacles to promotion

In order to get a sense of how many men and women associates are holding leadership positions in CLA, I had the Dean’s assistant compile a list of faculty members holding ‘director’ positions. They included directors of programs in the college, directors of graduate studies, and directors of undergraduate studies (did not include heads or associate deans). This was a quick compilation that by no means reflects other ‘high’ time commitments work such as chairs of search committees or members of cluster hire committees (example-the college methods cluster committee). Refer to table 3. As of 2017, 15 women and 18 men associates hold a leadership position in CLA. This is distinctly different at the full professor level; a matter of concern as very few women compared to men full professors hold major positions in the college.

Table 3: Men and Women holding ‘director’ position in College (2017) (not heads)

Rank	Women	Men
Assistant	2	2
Associate	15	18
Full	5	20
Continuing Lecturer	1	0

But it was beyond the scope of my project to study the time spent in service by associates, that other scholarly work report (cf. Misra et al 2011).⁵ In fact, Misra et al (2011) note

⁵ Noting the complexities in recognition of contributions to governance, the Butler Center organized a panel on faculty workloads and rewards which includes an NSF awardee who is

that there is a “need for administrators to reconsider institutional housekeeping as the work of faculty/professoriate. Universities need to recognize, reward, and publicize their faculty’s service, mentoring, and teaching accomplishments, in addition to their research; and ensure that promotions recognize the wide range of contributions faculty make” (p. 26).

How do we incorporate contributions to leadership into faculty success and excellence that will enable promotions? While such contributions cannot substitute for research, they should find some weight in assessments of contributions. In addition, there should be considerations for compensation – additional monetary compensation versus time in terms of course release. Or should associates decline leadership/governance positions (say ‘no’ as assistants are frequently advised)? What are the consequences for both associates and institutions if they decline leadership/governance positions? These questions have implications for individual faculty aspirations and institutional goals especially for building leadership skills. Reports from Michigan State University and University of Nebraska, Lincoln call for developing leadership skills and recognizing leadership contributions by associates.⁶ In fact, some scholarly work even refers to higher education’s impending leadership crisis.

Department Support to Pursue Research Fellowship Opportunities

A second key theme was support for associates who receive fellowships (internal and external) and the uneven ways in which it is handled across departments in the college. While few faculty noted they’re supported, many others referred to such opportunities as becoming a burden.

- “I feel like we’re punished when we get them [fellowships, opportunities] because-.... but I feel like sometimes, the conversations that happen when you get them makes you feel you’ve done something wrong. Now, the person has to deal with how they’re going to cover your teaching things or whatever...that shouldn’t be the narrative. I feel like the narrative should be, ‘congratulations. This elevates our department. We’re really excited for you,’ right? Then, if you can contribute in some sort of way if you’re needed to help with whatever is needed for covering your classes...you do that that should not be your [the associate professor’s] burden”

Receiving a fellowship to pursue research is an accomplishment and departments/the college must support such faculty, As I note in my recommendations, faculty members on fellowships should not be required to serve on committees and finding a replacement for teaching is the responsibility of the department. This also led to raising concerns about teaching. Associates noted the following:

- Variations within College in how much and how teaching is recognized

working on this topic. This panel was held on March 8, 2018. The video recording link will be made available by the end of the Spring 2018 semester.

⁶ See Dezure, Deborah, Allyn Shaw, and Julie Rojewski. 2014. Cultivating the Next Generation of Academic Leaders: Implications for Administrators and Faculty. www.changemag.org.

MSU documents: Checklist of Best Practices for Mid-Career Faculty Member Advancement-
http://www.adapp-advance.msu.edu/sites/default/files/files_adapp-advance/resource/apr_midcareer_indfaculty_cklst_0.pdf. & Mapping the Terrain of Mid-Career Faculty at a Research University: Implications for Faculty and Academic Leaders-
<http://fod.msu.edu/sites/default/files/Mapping-the-Terrain-of-Mid-Career-Faculty-A.pdf>

UNL Document: Enhancing Diversity and Inclusion- <http://diversity.unl.edu/diversity-efforts-unl>

- Faculty teaching large classes typically receive awards
- Over-reliance on teaching evaluations which are biased against women and faculty of color
- Diversity is work: no credit for enabling success of students of color

Recognition and Disparities in Salary

There were mixed reactions to recognition at the College level such as being covered in ‘for the honor.’ While some faculty noted the lack of consistency in what is recognized, others said that they did not care about such recognition. Discussions about recognition also included salary disparities by gender within and across ranks; and across similar disciplines.

What to Do to be Promoted

In both, the FGDs and in-depth interviews, associates expressed lack of clarity in what to do to be promoted (this was also one of the findings by the COACHE working group in 2016 and which was covered in the newsletter by the then Provost). There were concerns about the very narrow understanding of accomplishments and excellence and variations in understanding what mentoring is about.

- “Post-tenure there is a deafening silence. No mentoring, no word, go look in the department guidelines and go from there. All the things we do isn’t recognized in my department, no grant writing, nothing. You don’t get credit for it, it’s nice you did that, but nothing else - Deafening silence”

It is important to point out that women’s success and recognition are not at the expense of men’s success – it is not a zero-sum game. It is about having administrative leadership recognize and value contributions to governance and research. (I am NOT suggesting that promotions be based on contributions to governance.)

What the Dean’s Office Must Do

There are no easy solutions to many of the complicated concerns raised by associates in CLA. Individual aspirations and institutional goals have to be reconciled to develop policies and mechanisms for strategic thinking about excellence. Below are some steps that I suggest the Office of the Dean take up as soon as possible.

Making Information Available

Convene a meeting of assistants and associates (separately) annually to provide information about procedures and process related to tenure and promotion. The meeting can follow the format of the meeting organized in September 2017 (discussed above).

Recognition and Rewards

Recommendations related to recognition and rewards consists of several parts and I address each of them below.

(a) Some associates, especially women, take on extensive service responsibilities that contribute to governance at the department or college level. Other universities have begun to discuss ways to incorporate these contributions in considerations for promotion (example is UMass, Amherst). There must be some threshold of contributions to governance required by associates before being promoted to full professors because if we do not incorporate this, such work will continue to

remain gendered. This is not only in the interest of the faculty member but of the university as well – it is a means to develop leadership skills that the university can tap into when needed. We (Purdue) probably need to address this by developing a rubric to distinguish between what are routine service in committees versus those that involve time and effort and are opportunities for taking on leadership responsibilities that are relevant for the department/college/university. There must be accountability with regard to associates' contribution to governance so that people do their fair share. It appears that an associate can be promoted to full professor rank by doing little to no service. There are no consequences for not contributing and yet they are promoted and receive raises. That does not make for a very encouraging or supportive environment. Addressing these issues thoroughly may require the creation of a task force that can carefully work through categories of services to be recognized. Perhaps, the task force can be created in consultation with the CLA Senate.

(b) Associates holding leadership positions such as Directors of programs must be provided with the option of accepting a monetary compensation or some form of course release to give them the much-needed time for research and writing.

(c) Concerns with teaching noted above (in the findings section) may be set aside until the task force headed by the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs submits its report.

(d) Consistency: There must be consistency in recognition at the department and college level, irrespective of whether it be newsletters, for the honor, THINK magazine etc. Making known the criteria for recognition such as what will be included in 'for the honor' will help faculty understand the basis for recognition that will also make for a more informed process.

(e) Salary disparities: Gender disparity in salary needs to be addressed. All differences cannot be simply explained by 'performance.' Close scrutiny within and across ranks and across similar disciplines is necessary. The goal should be to ensure retention across all ranks

(f) Transparency at the department and college level: Ensure transparency about budget and merit raises across ranks and by gender and race. Making known the procedure for awarding merit raises, without revealing names or amounts, can go a long way in alleviating concerns. We often dismiss raises/merit raises at the associate or full professor level as being less important. Not valuing our own faculty at the associate or full professor ranks until they receive some other job offer is a negative way of recognizing and valuing faculty.

(g) Supporting associates who receive fellowships: Associates who receive fellowships (internal to Purdue or external) must be recused from departmental service. If the fellowship is partial such as half-time, service must be accordingly adjusted. The fellowships are intended to provide research and writing time for faculty. The Dean can issue a memo in this regard to ensure uniformity across departments.

(h) Promotion and Mentoring: Although the Dean's office has signaled to departments to ensure mentoring of assistant and associate professors, I think there is a need for a resources network that can be utilized by associates. I suggest creation of a resource network comprising women and men full professors from across CLA departments whom associates can approach informally

for advice and suggestions. The network can comprise six full professors with varying overlapping terms such that 2 or 3 rotate out each year. This can reinforce any individual/committee mentoring occurring at the department level.

(i) Watching from the ‘Top’: One way to achieve gender equity is to create accountability up and down the organizational ladder.⁷ Departments should be rated by their current status with respect to gender equity (and diversity more generally) and by steps taken to improve gender equity. A department’s equity status can then be used as a criterion for allotting space and resources to departments and as a criterion for giving departments permission to search for new hires. The senior administration can reward departments that demonstrate equity in practice and allocate fewer resources to departments where credible evidence exists of bias, discrimination, harassment, or insufficient attention to gender equity. Leaders must lead as they have the power and they must use it to create equity. It may even be worth considering mid-term review of heads to ensure accountability.

Diversity, Inclusion, and Bias

Many faculty want to see greater diversity among faculty and graduate students. In my other role as the Chair and Director of the Butler Center, I’ve heard this issue raised repeatedly in the panels on conversations about inclusion.⁸ We need to move beyond ‘lip-service’ to foster diversity. But just as we want flexibility in recognition through for the honor, we also need to be flexible in considering excellence. Let us learn from the College of Engineering and their hiring processes/practices. It may be worth it to invite one or two key faculty members from engineering to learn about the procedures they have adopted to hire diverse faculty. Their broad view of excellence has enabled them to hire women and faculty of color.

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⁷ Small imbalances add up to disadvantage women. Success is largely the accumulation of advantage, exploiting small gains to obtain bigger ones (Merton 1968). A computer simulation by Martell, Lane and Emrich (1996) showed the importance of very small amounts of bias. The researchers simulated an eight-level hierarchical institution with a pyramidal structure. They staffed this hypothetical institution with equal numbers of men and women at each level. The model assumed a tiny bias in favor of promoting men, a bias accounting for only 1 percent of the variability in promotion. After repeated iterations, the top level was 65 percent male. Even very small amounts of disadvantage accumulate over time (Valian 2005).

⁸ The series was started in fall 2017 and continues through spring 2018. Four panels were set for spring 2018, including one in which Provost Akridge spoke.

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