Transforming Science and Engineering

ADVANCING ACADEMIC WOMEN

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& Danielle LaVaque-Manty

EDITORS

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Faculty Recruitment

Mobilizing Science and Engineering Faculty

Abigail J. Stewart, Janet E. Malley, & Danielle LaVaque-Manty

When the National Science Foundation (NSF) announced the Institutional Transformation grant program, it stated that “women scientists and engineers continue to be significantly underrepresented in some science and engineering fields and proportionately under-advanced in science and engineering in general in the Nation’s colleges and universities. There is increasing recognition that the lack of women’s full participation at the senior level of academe is often a systemic consequence of academic culture” (National Science Foundation 2001). The intervention outlined in this chapter aimed to address institutional factors that impede women’s progress through the first doorway to a faculty career: recruitment into a full-time, tenure-track position. We believe that it is crucial to establish a “critical mass” of women faculty in every science and engineering department at the University of Michigan in order to reduce the salience of gender schemas—hypotheses about what men and women are like—that disadvantage women at all stages of their faculty careers. We use the term recruitment deliberately throughout the chapter to signify that hiring women faculty is necessarily a proactive process that often requires search committees to look beyond their usual applicant pools to find excellent women candidates.

Addressing recruitment raises broader questions about the evaluation of faculty members (in annual reviews, promotion and tenure reviews,
and other settings), as well as everyday work environments for women. The specific approach we describe, though, focused narrowly and intensively on issues associated with recruitment per se. We assumed throughout that the larger work environment inevitably affected recruitment, and that the long-term impact of recruitment would depend on changes in the work environment. We also understood that recruitment practices alone could not effect significant long-term change. This systemic perspective was articulated in all activities outlined here, but we nevertheless maintained a strategic emphasis on recruitment, believing that doing so would not only have concrete results in the short term—increasing the number of women faculty members—but would also provide an opportunity to educate faculty about evaluation bias and climate problems that disadvantage women at every stage of their academic careers. Our efforts were no doubt enhanced and impeded by the relative success and failure of other efforts to improve other domains of institutional practice.

Our approach to hiring began from two empirically well-supported assumptions. First, women have been receiving an increasing proportion of the doctorates in science and engineering fields but do not apply for open faculty positions in numbers proportional to their doctorates. This suggests that women "choose" not to pursue tenure-track faculty positions (Sears 2003; Xie and Shauman 2003; Sonnert and Holton 1996); their choices may result from perceptions of their chances of academic success or of the costs of pursuing academic careers. Second, women on the tenure track advance more slowly and are likelier to exit than men (Valian 1999; Etzkowitz, Kemelgor, and Uzzi 2000; Long 2001).

Creating STRIDE to Increase the Number of Women in Science and Engineering

Given the gap between doctoral production and applications for faculty positions, waiting for women to apply for open positions will not increase the numbers of women faculty; a proactive approach is essential. Moreover, there is clear evidence that the climate must also change if recruited women are to stay and thrive (Fried et al. 1996; Stewart, Stubbs, and Malley 2003). At the UM, we created a faculty committee called Strategies and Tackles for Recruiting to Improve Diversity and Excellence (STRIDE) to improve recruitment and hiring of women scientists through peer education. Key tasks for the committee were increasing faculty awareness of issues involved in recruiting women, and providing conceptual and practical support to faculty eager to work on recruitment.

It is not obvious to all faculty members that proactive recruitment of women is warranted, or even that it is not in itself a form of discrimination against men (Fried et al. 1996). Moreover, hiring is perceived by most faculty members as a key activity ensuring the vitality, excellence, and status of their intellectual community. Thus, it is crucial that STRIDE engage in open, respectful dialogue with faculty, admitting of a complex range of goals in any hiring process.

It is optimal if that dialogue takes place among individuals recognized by all as legitimate and equal stakeholders in the hiring process. For example, we suspected that scientists would be more receptive to ideas they might otherwise dismiss as unnecessary or "political" if they learned about them through colleagues they respected as researchers and individuals. Thus, STRIDE members are full professors in science and engineering fields who were nominated by the deans of their colleges to serve on the committee because the deans saw them as being both highly credible with other faculty and concerned about issues of diversity in science. It should be noted, though, that none of them was associated with issues affecting women in science at the time that they joined the committee. Because women may be seen as "partial" to their own cause when addressing problems confronting women, more than half of the committee members are men. The principal investigator for ADVANCE at the UM, who chaired the STRIDE committee, did not know the faculty members prior to inviting them to serve, nor did they know one another. Although STRIDE members volunteered time and expertise well in excess of what could be offered to them in compensation, all were provided with course release or research support in recognition of their work on behalf of the university community.

Development of STRIDE's Approach

In setting up the STRIDE committee, we learned a great deal from Harvard University's Committee on Faculty Diversity. The UM ADVANCE project PI met with members of Harvard's committee before bringing the founding members of STRIDE together for the first time. She presented the Harvard committee's recommendations: acquire sufficient staff support for committee activities; engage in regular communication with deans; have multiple members meet with search committees; include both men and women in every meeting if
possible; and be ready, with data, to talk about the demographics in each field. All of these became routine STRIDE practices. Other aspects of the Harvard committee’s approach (e.g., a focus on informal meetings outside of official settings) seemed better adapted to Harvard’s local culture than to Michigan’s. We believe that other institutions will be able to adapt STRIDE’s practices to suit their local conditions, just as we adapted those we learned from Harvard’s committee.

Combining science and social science proved central to STRIDE’s approach. The PI for ADVANCE at the UM is a professor in psychology and women’s studies, familiar with social science research on psychology and sociology of gender, but not expert on the world of science and engineering. STRIDE members were drawn from three different colleges: the Medical School, College of Engineering, and College of Literature, Science and Arts. Experts in the subjects and cultures of their respective fields, they were largely unfamiliar with social science literature on gender. Over time, through intensive self-study and discussion, these scientists and engineers became experts on social scientific understandings of gender dynamics and cognitive bias and advocates of social science research on these topics as a source of insight into recruitment and hiring processes.

Self-Study and Teaching Others

The eight members of STRIDE first met in April 2002, having read several articles suggested by the PI about science and gender, and part of Virginia Valian’s book Why So Slow? The Advancement of Women. They watched a videotaped lecture by Valian and began to discuss the central problems involved in hiring and retaining women, both in their own experience and as examined in the social science literature. As they developed some consensus on the nature of the problem, and ideas about solutions, they also discussed the best means of communicating this information to their colleagues.

While the group found many of the articles they read useful (and were moved by the high level of replication and validation of basic findings in many studies), they were particularly impressed with Valian’s synthesis of empirical research. They found the experimental results Valian reports in her book and lecture persuasive and believed their colleagues would, too. They began to build a presentation around key concepts presented by Valian and others. The central ideas that seemed crucial to convey were critical mass, gender schemas, evaluation bias, and accumulation of disadvantage. They wanted to stress that (1) men and women both rely on gender schemas, or hypotheses about what men and women are like, (2) these schemas lead them to underevaluate women in science and engineering and other professional settings, and (3) small disadvantages accrue to women in ways that build over time. Women scientists are often told not to make mountains out of molehills, but as Valian notes in her lecture, mountains are molehills piled one on top of the other. Moreover, when women are underrepresented, their gender is particularly salient, triggering reliance on gender schemas.

These concepts were the building blocks of STRIDE’s understanding. The next step was to apply them to academic recruitment, ideally by tying them directly to potential recruitment practices. STRIDE sought to identify strategies that would (for example) lower the salience of gender, minimize reliance on gender schemas, and help committees fairly evaluate candidates. STRIDE members found their discussions of potential recruitment strategies and approaches to persuading colleagues of these points intellectually invigorating and deeply mobilizing. Deciding that their job was to meet with anyone with input into hiring, including department chairs, search committees, and entire departmental faculties, they worked with the ADVANCE project’s program manager, who provided staff support, to design the materials they would offer prospective audiences. This entailed meeting for more than twenty hours over the course of four months, with reading and email exchanges between sessions.

STRIDE designed a PowerPoint presentation that would serve as a road map for discussions with various audiences. Though individual committee members could (and did) alter it as needed, the goal was to create a fairly uniform framework for STRIDE presentations. They designed and discarded many slides while developing consensus about what data were most useful and which intellectual points most central. Eventually, they configured the presentation so that the level of detail offered could be tailored to the interests of particular audiences through pop-ups and links. They also collaborated in writing a twenty-seven-page recruitment handbook. Arguing over the specific content of these materials allowed committee members to air concerns and differences and create common priorities, forging a collective understanding that underlies their ongoing mobilization as “activists” on behalf of gender equity in academic science and engineering. For example, they argued at length over whether or not it would be helpful for search committees to let women candidates know that they were trying hard to hire
women. The men thought it would send a positive signal that the
department was attentive to gender issues, while the women thought it
would make the candidate feel that she was being considered for reasons
other than the quality of her research and teaching. In the end, the men
came around to the women’s point of view, and STRIDE agreed to
advise departments to “recruit women scientists as scientists, not as
women.”

Between September 2002 and April 2003 STRIDE made twenty-six
presentations and distributed over three hundred copies of the hand-
book. Most presentations were made to entire departmental faculties or
search committees, but audiences also included deans and other groups
of administrators. In addition, after they met with the dean of the Col-
lege of Literature, Science and Arts, he adopted the handbook as part of
the College’s recruiting process and distributed it to all College search
committees, even those that did not invite STRIDE to give presenta-
tions. Finally, two dean search committees consulted with the STRIDE
committee chair about their hiring processes and also received the hand-
book.

Changing STRIDE Activities over Time

Development of FASTER. STRIDE’s activities have evolved since that
first year. During the summer of 2003 the committee created a program
to develop additional colleagues who would have a fuller understanding
of the issues and who might eventually become new members of
STRIDE. They designed a six-hour program (which took place in two
half-days), based on their own past curriculum, to share what they had
learned with selected colleagues. STRIDE hoped to replicate its experi-
ences of the previous year and cultivate an expanded group of
“activists.” Because having specific tasks and problems to solve (e.g., a
presentation to design and a handbook to write) had given them con-
crete ways to apply new theoretical insights, they gave their colleagues
something to work on as well: helping to improve STRIDE’s approach
to departments and search committees. The new group named itself
Friends and Allies of Science and Technology Equity in Recruiting
(FASTER). STRIDE has since acquired two new and enthusiastic
members, from the pool of allies who attended FASTER sessions.

New Goal Setting. At the end of its first year, STRIDE decided it was
important to address some issues better and requested material for con-
tinuing self-education. Concerning them most were the impact of fam-
ily and personal life issues on women scientists and engineers, pressure
to spend long hours in the lab or office, and the importance of race and
ethnicity as well as gender. They studied these concerns intensively and
added material to their presentation to cover them.

In addition, the committee believed that its presentations were not
interactive enough. Being scheduled into regular department meetings
(which had seemed desirable at first) made time short and left people dis-
tacted by other agendas. They believed that their own insecurities dis-
cussing the issues also reduced their effectiveness. In the beginning they
preferred an easier-to-control lecture mode over an interactive seminar
mode. Now, though, they were ready for more interaction. They
redesigned the presentation to include less data, fewer didactic points,
and more discussion.

Collaborating with CRLT. During the next year, fewer departments,
committees, and groups requested STRIDE’s presentations, partly
because of budget constraints on hiring. Even where there were searches,
chairs felt they had already brought STRIDE in the year before, and
department colleagues were unsure whether further interaction with
STRIDE would be useful. However, STRIDE was newly engaging in
other activities. For example, as a way of making a commitment to facili-
tate women’s success and retention, the committee began introducing
itself to incoming women faculty who might turn to them for advice in the
future. It also developed a relationship with another group working on
climate issues through the ADVANCE Project, the Center for
Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT) Players.

CRLT Players, an interactive theater group that specializes in depict-
ing teacher-student interactions, was commissioned to develop sketches
for ADVANCE. The first sketch, portraying a faculty meeting in an
engineering department, was designed to reveal problematic dynamics
where women are a small minority of the faculty. The topic of the
“meeting” involves a hiring decision where one candidate is a woman.
The sketch is too complex to summarize here and is discussed in detail
elsewhere in this volume (chapter 13), but it provides rich material for
discussion. CRLT has highly skilled facilitators, but they depend on
audiences to ask good questions to get discussion started. STRIDE real-
ized that it could play a role in those discussions by sending some mem-
bers to attend performances to ask key questions audiences might not
come up with otherwise.

Finally, the provost asked the ADVANCE PI to make a presentation
to every search committee for new deans, identifying gender-equitable
practices searches for high-level administrators could employ. She distributed STRIDE's recruitment handbook and presented STRIDE-based "talking points" at these meetings.

Administrative Support. By the end of the second academic year, it seemed clear that STRIDE's original process of engagement—through department meetings—was restricting its contributions to campus hiring. The ADVANCE Steering Committee, which included the deans of the Medical School and the colleges of Engineering and Literature, Science and the Arts, invited STRIDE to develop a workshop that could be delivered to larger, more heterogeneous audiences of faculty across the three colleges. They proposed that they could mandate that all search committee chairs in their three colleges participate in STRIDE workshops focused on recruitment. In addition, two of the deans instituted a form of "short-list review," whereby slates of candidates for on-campus interviews (the "short list") were compared with the pool of applicants. If a demographic group was less well represented in the short list than in the pool, the dean's office had an opportunity for a conversation with the department or search committee chair. Equally, if a group was underrepresented on both lists, this could be discussed. The short-list review offered, then, a formal opportunity for discussion of the degree to which the search successfully identified diverse candidates, and if it had not, why.

In response to the deans' interest, STRIDE designed a much longer structure for interaction with search committee chairs, and offered three two-and-a-half-hour workshops during fall 2004. These included brief presentations on six separate topics: (1) what is the problem?, (2) why diversity matters, (3) unconscious bias in evaluation, (4) recruitment strategies, (5) dual-career and family policies, and (6) how family matters for evaluation bias. The PI introduced the presentations, summarized key points at the end, and facilitated discussion of issues raised. This format offered fuller coverage of each issue. A total of fifty-nine faculty heading or serving on search committees in the three colleges participated in one of the three workshops. Both STRIDE and the participants found that extended discussion, with full coverage of many topics, was much more productive than brief interactions. In addition, the search committee chairs were highly motivated by their roles to focus on what STRIDE had to offer. And STRIDE worked hard to help search committee chairs, pointing to very specific practices and providing new materials for their use. For example, they developed a new tool for rat-

ing job candidates that would help minimize reliance on stereotypes by focusing judges on specific and individuating evidence.

STRIDE's Future

No doubt STRIDE will continue to evolve as institutional demands change. It is currently broadening its mandate, at the provost's request, beyond science and engineering. Over time, the University plans to support the committee centrally (without NSF funds). As STRIDE moves toward that model, it must expand its focus to include all fields, incorporate new members, and eventually replace the current group entirely. It is hoped that FASTER will continue to serve as a conduit for recruiting new participants in STRIDE, as it did with its first pair of new recruits. This is the outgrowth of its own success and of an active partnership with the deans on the steering committee and the provost. Meanwhile, we are gathering data that suggest that it has had significant impact. Our data include evaluations by audiences of STRIDE presentations, actual recruitment and hiring of women during the first two years of STRIDE's operation, and reported effects of participating on STRIDE members themselves.

Measuring STRIDE's Impact

Reception of STRIDE by Faculty Members

ADVANCE project staff conducted two web surveys of faculty members: the first in departments that hosted STRIDE presentations in the first year; the second of workshop attendees in fall 2004. Administrators and other nonfaculty or nondepartmental groups were not included in the survey.

Survey after the first year. The first web survey was sent to all faculty in relevant departments, via e-mail using department e-mail lists. Twenty-eight faculty (about 20% of those surveyed) who had attended presentations completed surveys. Because the surveys were anonymous, we were unable to attach individual responses to departments or the specific presentation each respondent attended. The survey asked respondents to rate the effectiveness of the presentation(s) on a scale from 1, "not at all
effective,” to 5, “very effective.” Open-ended questions asked what was most and least effective about the presentation(s) and what, if any, effect the presentation(s) had on their respective departments and their search processes.

Overall ratings ranged from 2 to 5, with a skew toward favorable ratings (seventeen of twenty-eight giving the top two ratings). A quarter gave a negative rating of 2 (seven of twenty-eight). This is not surprising, since the most motivated individuals—those who very much liked or disliked the presentation—were likely to respond to a web survey. The presentation received more positive ratings than negative ones (over 60% rated the presentation as “very effective” or “effective”), and nobody rated the presentation “not at all effective.” One respondent explained that the presentation was “excellent,” but rated it “not very effective” (9) because the faculty member thought it had no impact on this individual’s department’s searches.

Open-ended comments about the most and least effective aspects of the presentations provided further context for these ratings. The paramount value of the presentations to several respondents was that senior faculty were taking the time to bring these issues out into the open for discussion, lending credibility to their importance.

Respondents also noted the quality of the presentations, describing them as “excellent,” “well-argued,” “consistent,” and “professional.” Two issues appeared to be reflected here: STRIDE’s thorough discussions of both demographic data about women’s training and hiring history and gender bias, including a clear review of research in this area. Respondents were also impressed by STRIDE’s summary of research on gender bias and schemas, particularly the examples illustrating how well-intentioned behaviors can unwittingly result in bias. STRIDE relied on video clips from a talk by Virginia Valian (2001) that several mentioned as particularly effective in making this point.

Some respondents expressed concerns that the presentations were not effective in reaching some faculty, variously pinpointing men, chairs, or senior faculty. A few respondents were not themselves persuaded by the information STRIDE presented. One reported, “I remain unconvinced by the main hypothesis.” Some reported that they “felt accused of being sexist.” On the other hand, some felt STRIDE’s message was watered down so it would not be offensive, and as a result, was less effective. One respondent was optimistic that the positive impact of STRIDE’s presentations might not be immediate. “There was certainly some reaction against the presentation . . . but I believe there was also some very useful information that my colleagues will have reflected on, as I have.”

Many respondents felt the STRIDE presentations had a positive effect on their departments, most often by making faculty more aware of the issues. In all, eleven of the twenty-seven faculty who responded to this question (41%) indicated that the STRIDE presentation had had some positive effect on their departments and how they conduct searches. In contrast, thirteen (48%) indicated that there was no clear change in department hiring practices as a result; the remaining three respondents (11%) didn’t know if STRIDE had had an effect or not. Thus, there was evidence from the first survey that STRIDE had a positive impact on the recruitment process. There was also evidence that change was not uniform; STRIDE was able to use the critical feedback in designing the workshops for fall 2004.

Reception of STRIDE Workshops

After holding the newly designed workshops, UM ADVANCE’s evaluation staff sent an on-line survey to the fifty-nine attendees. Twenty-three of the twenty-six respondents (88%) rated their workshop overall as very effective or somewhat effective; three attendees gave a neutral rating. There was relatively little variation in specific topic ratings, though the section on “unconscious bias in evaluation” received the most uniformly positive rating. No respondents reported a “not at all effective” rating for any topic. Attendees were also asked what was most effective. The three most common responses to this question were (1) the presentation was well supported by data and substantive research; (2) the workshop provided specific, practicable strategies and recommendations; (3) the presenters were focused, enthusiastic, and knowledgeable.

Regarding what was least effective, some respondents said presenters spent too much time trying to convince the audience that the problem exists and not enough time on details and strategies, and that they found the style of presentation or the workshop atmosphere flawed. Respondents offered a variety of suggestions for improvement, mainly focusing on making the workshop more interactive, and focusing even more on solutions and strategies.

With respect to how the workshop might improve searches in their department, most respondents focused on its effects on their own roles in the search process. One commented, “My own reading of letters has been altered by the impact of the data in the paper [we read].” Another
asserted that “if . . . very few women are in the pool, we will . . . solicit more names and applications.” Another wrote, “[The workshop] has already affected [the respondent’s role] (e.g. by my pushing a colleague to tell me the outstanding women in addition to his short-list of outstanding candidates).” One search chair commented, “I will strongly recommend that all members of the committee have written notes on each candidate, because the workshops helped me realize that this is probably the most common way that bias can enter the process. I will also encourage my committee to be able to justify why they are removing applications from the acceptable pile.”

A clear majority of respondents supported the idea of offering this kind of workshop on an annual basis. A few recommended expanding the target audience to include all faculty (particularly new department chairs and directors) as well as administrative staff who support search committees. One commented, “It would be a serious mistake to have this kind of training program developed and not used to reach everyone and keep the momentum going.”

The longer workshop format, targeting search committee chairs, was clearly better received than earlier presentations to more diverse faculty groups. It is possible that more sympathetic individuals were asked to head searches, and therefore the audience for the workshops reflected a narrower band of opinion. However, these were precisely the faculty most able to influence recruitment through their roles as search committee chairs.

Impact on Hiring

Another aspect of STRIDE’s effectiveness can be measured by comparing the proportion of women scientists and engineers hired during the most recent academic years to the proportion hired in the past. Table 1 shows the proportion of men and women hired in each of the three colleges that employ the largest number of scientists and engineers at the University of Michigan over the last four academic years. Note the marked, and statistically significant, increase in the proportion of women hired comparing the two pre-STRIDE years (AY2001 and AY2002) with the three post-STRIDE years (AY2003, AY2004, and AY2005) (chi-square = 10.33, p = .001). During the academic year (AY) 2003 recruitment period, the absolute number of women hired in the three colleges employing the largest number of scientists and engineers increased between three-
fourfold (from six and four to nineteen). While University-wide budgetary constraints resulted in a drop in total number of faculty hired in AY2004, the improved pattern persisted; the proportion of women hired in those colleges more than doubled in AY2003 and AY2004 when compared to the two preceding years.

While many factors doubt contributed to departments’ willingness to hire more women, STRIDE is the intervention that most directly provided tools and ideas to aid in recruitment. Moreover, of sixteen women hired in the first year, twelve were hired into departments that had STRIDE presentations (and all chairs were exposed to STRIDE presentations and could have made use of the recruitment handbook). It is reasonable to conclude that STRIDE, having addressed so many audiences and drawn specific attention to useful policies and resources, contributed to the increase in the number of women hired. For example, many search committees and department members STRIDE met with were unaware that the University had resources to aid in placing spouses and partners of new faculty, and some were unaware of University policies regarding maternity and the tenure clock. Further, anecdotal evidence suggests that at least one department successfully recruited a highly regarded female candidate away from strong competitors partly because of specific advice from STRIDE.

Impact on Committee Members

Seven of the eight founding members of STRIDE were interviewed in fall 2002, shortly after they began making public presentations. They were interviewed again in December 2003, when they had significantly more experience working together and interacting with departments and search committees. (The eighth original member of STRIDE retired from the UM in 2002.)

In the first round of interviews, all seven STRIDE members indicated that their summer “study sessions” had a strong impact on their understanding of the problems women science and engineering faculty confront. They were impressed by what social science could tell them. One of the men on the committee put it, “I was surprised by the number of studies... on the nature of the bias, and where the bias comes from... there’s been a lot of really, really good research that’s been done... these studies are fantastic.”

The women found themselves rethinking not only the gendered nature of science and engineering, but also the way their own careers have been shaped by dynamics that they may have chosen, or else by patterns of recruitment and self-defense, to the extent that they’ve learned what unconscious bias was, and how prevalent it is, and how it works... I discovered... that I’ve heard stories of how women who have worked in their own career I had been coping by denying that I had ever had any problems... it turned out to be much more of an emotional voyage than I had ever expected it to be.”

In the interviews in December 2003, STRIDE members referred back to their “study sessions,” again describing their summer 2002 conversations as part of a period of discovery, or, as one member put it, “consciousness-raising.” Another member said:

The process that we went through worked so well... the process of identifying a group of senior faculty, both men and women, in the sciences and engineering, who have shown some evidence of being concerned about these issues, but who clearly don’t know all the literature. And I think every one of us... is like that... We all had some previous commitment, but what we realized when we got together and started actually looking at the data and learning from each other was that we didn’t understand, we didn’t really know what was going on, we really were quite naive... that discovery process, I think, was so critical to building the passion that the current group has.

More than a year elapsed between the first set of interviews and the second, while the STRIDE team continued to read articles and studies on gender and science and to give presentations throughout the university, gaining increasing confidence in their ability to present this information persuasively. All seven STRIDE members reported in the second interview that they were as motivated as before, and felt more assured in their roles, both in giving their presentations and in dealing with colleagues informally. Further, all mentioned intervening in ways they believed they would not have prior to experience with STRIDE.

One man said, “You could say, perhaps, that I’ve become a bit more combative; things that I used to just shy away from, I now feel that... I’m obligated to do something about.” Similarly, one woman reported,
Conclusions and Recommendations

STRIDE’s work is still in progress. However, its early success in improving recruitment and hiring of women science and engineering faculty at the UM leads us to recommend it as a model that might be adopted by other institutions. We believe that the long-term effects of mobilizing these highly respected scientists can only be positive for women faculty. STRIDE constitutes a core group of advocates, not only well intentioned and strongly motivated, but also unusually well informed, combining expertise in science and engineering with an understanding of social science literature on gender. We incorporate here both our own observations about factors that may have made an important difference in STRIDE’s formation and practice, and those offered by members of the STRIDE committee.

1. The request to serve on STRIDE came from a campus-wide project thoroughly legitimated by the central administration and associated with an institutional commitment to a long-term process of change.

2. Concrete resources were provided to compensate for time spent on the committee. This not only provided enabling conditions to faculty members, but also communicated the seriousness of the institutional commitment.

3. The commitment to serve extended over several years. This persuaded many committee members that the duration of the planned effort matched that required to create and sustain change.

4. The committee felt supported in its work by having access to an “expert” on the social science literature on gender and a support staff competent to help members find the empirical and theoretical literature they were interested in and help them implement their ideas.

5. The committee worked together over an extended period defining and redefining its own message and strategy; its autonomy and capacity to define its own “charge” were, and remain, highly valued.

6. The committee included participants from each of the most significant relevant environments (the three large colleges), which gave it lots of relevant experience and examples to analyze once it had tools to do so.

7. The committee included both men and women, all highly respected in their fields.
8. The committee thrashed out hard issues, building trust in each other and confidence in their message.

9. The committee processed experiences on a frequent basis, using feedback to modify its activities. A sense of growth made it feel effective in responding to changing conditions.

STRIDE members are the first to admit that it is not possible to persuade everyone to care about gender equity or believe that an equitable system and culture are not already in place. Indeed, they convey to colleagues both the very slow pace of change and the consequent need for long-term commitment and persistence. They believe, though, that starting a conversation about the issues involved is a useful first step. We believe that the STRIDE approach is one promising way to start that conversation and set the stage for an ongoing process of transformation of institutional recruitment practices.

NOTES

This chapter draws some material from an earlier paper on the STRIDE committee (Stewart, LaVaque-Manty, and Malley 2004).

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1. The acronym originally stood for Science and Technology Recruitment to Improve Diversity and Excellence but has since been revised. See Stewart, LaVaque-Manty, and Malley 2004 for a more detailed study of STRIDE’s early development.

2. The initial committee included Pamela Raymond and Michael Savageau from the School of Medicine; Anthony England and Martha Pollack from the College of Engineering; and Carol Fierke, Melvin Hochster, Samuel Mukasa, and John Vandermeer from the College of Literature, Science and the Arts. Michael Sav-

ageau retired from UM and the committee at the end of the first year. Gary Huffnagle from the School of Medicine and Wayne Jones from the College of Engineering joined the committee in December 2003.

3. Five of the original eight; six of the current nine.


5. See http://www.umich.edu/~advproj/stride.html for further information about these materials. STRIDE’s presentation road map, as well as the handbook, are available at http://www.umich.edu/~advproj/stridepresents_files/frame.htm.

6. Three individuals—Danielle LaVaque-Manty, Robin Stephenson, and Cynthia Hudgings—have provided outstanding support to STRIDE in this role.


8. Available on the project web site: http://www.umich.edu/~advproj/candi-
date_evaluation_sheet.pdf.

REFERENCES


