

Initializing Dual Career Services: Striving for Excellence
Or
Initializing Dual Career Services: Adapting for Change

Seeking to enhance recruitment and retention efforts for female faculty, a core group of senior female faculty of Gannon University (Erie, PA) developed TRANSFORM: Teaching Research Advancement Network to Secure Female Faculty for Organizational Retention and Management. TRANSFORM is the over-arching term for the series of activities comprising the five-year grant awarded to Gannon University in 2011 by the National Science Foundation (NSF) through its ADVANCE “Partnerships for Adaptation, Implementation, and Dissemination” (PAID) program.

The goal of TRANSFORM is to increase the recruitment, retention, advancement, and leadership development of female faculty at Gannon University. The goal will be realized through four objectives: 1) recruit and retain female faculty in the STEM disciplines, 2) advance female faculty through the rank and tenure process, 3) prepare female faculty to hold effective leadership positions, and 4) educate deans, department chairs, and faculty leaders about issues affecting female faculty. The objectives are operationalized through three strategies, (1) Dual Career Services, (2) Research Initiation Awards, and (3) Leadership Development Seminars and Workshops.

Identification of the needs and goals of TRANSFORM, began with a 13-body focus group of female faculty, nine within science, engineering, technology and mathematics (STEM) majors. Gannon University, a small (approximately 4000 students and 190 full-time faculty), private, co-educational Catholic, comprehensive university offering primarily baccalaureate degrees, emphasizes a liberal studies education and offers professional specializations. The focus group worked with data, anecdotal evidence, and process understanding of Gannon University to develop the activities of the TRANSFORM strategies.

As with all ADVANCE-PAID grants, the proposed work built-upon and adapted approaches from ADVANCE Institutional Transformation grants. The Dual Career Services strategy is modeled after successful dual career offices implemented through ADVANCE grants at the University of Rhode Island, Grinnell College, University of Washington, University of Michigan, and the University of Oregon. Like those initiatives, the strategy focuses on the recruitment and retention of STEM female faculty members at Gannon University by helping trailing spouses and partners find regional employment. This strategy establishes cooperative agreements with regional universities and industries to create a regional professional employment database for skilled personnel. As a result, trailing partners will have greater opportunities to find suitable employment.

The paper presents the planned and on-going activities for the Dual Career Services strategy. Formative and summative assessment practices as well as operational management practices will be explained. The final challenge of the strategy of developing a funding channel for its sustainability is also addressed.