



**University of Texas – Pan American
NSF ADVANCE Institutional Transformation Grant**

**“Attracting and Nurturing Women Faculty at a
Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI)”**

**Year 1 Report
2012—2013**





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**The University of Texas –Pan American
NSF ADVANCE (Award # 1209210)**

**Year 1 Report
(2012 – 2013)**

I. PROJECT ORGANIZATION & MANAGEMENT

- The project implementation and management team (Project Leadership Team) is composed of the project PI, Co-PIs, other component leaders and senior personnel, as listed in the Organizational Chart (Appendix A).
- The Internal Advisory Committee (IAC) was appointed and informed of the ADVANCE goals/initiatives and of their roles in the project. The IAC is composed of all STEM Chairs, STEM faculty representatives, Faculty Senate Chair, EO/AA University officer, and the project leadership team. The IAC is co-chaired by the two (2) STEM Deans. The membership list is provided in the Organizational Chart (Appendix A).
- Members for an External Advisory Committee (EAC), to be chaired by UT-Pan American’s (UTPA) President, Dr. Robert S. Nelsen, were identified and the following five (5) members have agreed to serve:
 - Dr. Richard Tapia, Professor of Engineering, Rice University.
 - Dr. Cecilia Conrad, Director of the MacArthur Fellows Program, Washington D.C.
 - Dr. Felice J. Levine, Executive Director of the American Educational Research Association, Washington D.C.
 - Dr. Aída Hurtado, Professor and Chair of the Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara.
 - Dr. Luis Ricardo Fraga, Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Advancement and Director of the Diversity Research Institute at the University of Washington.

More information about the members and links to their biographies are provided in Appendix C. Each member has a proven track record and extensive experience in gender/diversity issues and/or STEM education. We are confident that they will provide us with the guidance and direction we need to achieve the project goals.

- A Vice Provost Faculty Fellow position was created in Fall 2012 for a faculty member to work in collaboration with Dr. Ala Qubbaj, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs (Lead Co-PI and Project Director), in directing and coordinating the various project activities. Applications were vetted and candidates interviewed in December 2012; Dr. Marie Mora (Professor of Economics, who was already on the Project Leadership Team) was selected and started in this position in January 2013. In addition, two STEM female Faculty Fellows (Dr. Hasina Huq from Electrical Engineering and Dr. Kristine Lowe from



Biology) were hired in Fall 2012 to facilitate the project efforts at their respective colleges, including the coordination of recruitment efforts with their corresponding search committees.

- Applications for Program Coordinator were received, vetted, and Claudia Garcia was offered the position. She began her role in January 2013 and works with the Project Leadership Team and the component teams.
- A dedicated space in the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs (VPFA) has been designated and set up for the Program Coordinator and other staff working on ADVANCE-related projects. Appropriate resources have been assigned and the space continues to be improved as needs arise.

II. SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A. GENERAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS (across all components)

In addition to the Project Organization & Management accomplishments listed in Section I above:

- Awarding of the NSF-ADVANCE grant was publicized to the campus and the broader external community during a press conference and subsequent press release ([UTPA News-Award](#)), which was picked up widely by regional and state media. In addition, the project was publicized through in-person announcements and presentations to various on-campus groups. A “people story” also ran on KVEO News Channel 23 in the Rio Grande Valley on April 5, 2013 ([KVEO News](#)), featuring Cristina Villalobos (Associate Professor of Mathematics and Co-PI). See Appendix D for a complete list of media coverage.
- A project timeline has been developed, covering the 5-year scope of the Institutional Transformation initiative (see Section IV).
- The UTPA ADVANCE website has been developed and went live on February 1, 2013. There is a link to the webpage from UTPA’s homepage, via the Directory. The ADVANCE website will be updated regularly to reflect program activities, accomplishments, events and training, publications, reports and resources others may find useful. The direct link is: www.utpa.edu/advance.
- An email account specifically for ADVANCE (advance@utpa.edu) was created on January 28, 2013 and is being used for all ADVANCE related communications.
- The UTPA ADVANCE logo was finalized on January 10, 2013 and is used regularly. Letterhead has been created and a consistent format for all program activity announcements (flyers) has been established and used. Plans are underway for other



promotional items featuring the logo (pins, pens, shirts, etc.). Requests for ADVANCE signage at the VPFA office have been made to the UTPA in-house design studio.

- External and internal evaluators were hired and evaluation plans have been developed (see Section V for more information). A campus visit by the external evaluator is scheduled for April 12, 2013; see Appendix E for the site visit agenda.
- The Internal Advisory Committee (IAC) had its first meeting on February 4, 2013.

B. SPECIFIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS (related to each of the five (5) project action components/initiatives)

B1. *RECRUITMENT INITIATIVE*

Personnel: Rebecca Mitchell, Vice Provost Fellow, Team Leader; Hasina Huq, ADVANCE STEM Fellow, Engineering; Kristine Lowe, ADVANCE STEM Fellow, Science and Mathematics; Esmeralda Guerra, EEO/ADA Coordinator; Andras Balogh, Chair of Mathematics and ADVANCE Fellow; Rajiv Nambiar, Chair of Manufacturing Engineering and ADVANCE Fellow (see Appendix A for list of team members).

- A recruitment plan was developed identifying four stages of the recruitment process: 1) search committee formation, 2) advertisement and outreach, 3) vetting/interview and campus visits, and 4) offers/start-up packages. The plan outlines specific measures and strategies in each of the aforementioned stages to ensure diversity in the search committees as well as in the applicant and interviewed pools and to leverage ADVANCE funding to enhance diversity among hires. Given that by the time we received the ADVANCE grant/funding the 2012-2013 cycle was well underway, we focused our efforts on stages 3 and 4 for this cycle. Details of the recruitment plan and strategies are provided in Appendix F.
- To track the status and progress of faculty searches in the STEM fields, tracking charts were developed and verified for all STEM faculty searches (See Appendix G).
- Meetings were held with the Deans, Associate Deans, Department Chairs, and search committee chairs of all STEM departments to introduce departments to the ADVANCE grant and discuss the recruitment plan and strategies for addressing diversity issues.
 - October 8: Meeting with Recruitment Team and STEM Deans
 - October 19: Meetings with COECS Executive Committee (Chairs & Dean) and (separately) meeting with COSM Executive Committee (Chairs & Dean)
 - November 1: Meeting with ADVANCE Fellows to discuss recruitment efforts in each college



- The ADVANCE Recruitment team has maintained regular email communication with STEM faculty and administration, including memos at each stage of the recruitment process
 - Stage 1: On November 12th, following the close of the base-line climate study, Provost Havidán Rodríguez sent a memo to all search committee chairs, STEM department Chairs, and STEM Deans noting the university's commitment to the goals of ADVANCE and requiring all search committees to reflect gender and ethnic diversity (Appendix H).
 - Stage 2: Memos regarding advertisement and outreach were distributed at October 19th meetings and in follow-up emails on November 6th (Appendix I).
 - Stage 3: Memo regarding the interview stage was emailed to all STEM department Chairs, search committee chairs, and STEM Deans on January 14th. Committees were urged to bring additional candidates to campus, to extend the visits of candidates, and to ensure that all women candidates were given the opportunity to meet with representatives from the Women's Faculty Network. (Appendix J).
 - Stage 4: Memo regarding the offer stage was emailed to all STEM department Chairs, search committee chairs, and STEM Deans on March 18th. Departments and colleges were reminded of the ADVANCE resources/process to enhance recruitment offers and provide for competitive start-up packages, including Graduate Research Assistants, equipment/labs, and travel support (Appendix K).
- Stage 3 (Interview Stage): 11 campus interviews of women applicants for STEM positions were supported by ADVANCE funds. Representatives from the Women's Faculty Network met with 7 of these candidates (Appendix L). UTPA faculty participating in the meetings offered enthusiastic feedback about the value of such meetings.
- Stage 4 (Offer Stage): As of March 29, offers are only now beginning to be extended to finalists. At least one of the campus interviewees supported by ADVANCE funds will be offered a position. The Recruitment team is actively following the results of these searches.
- To smooth the onboarding process and ensure a smooth transition for new STEM women hires, a "Launch" committee has been initiated. The committee includes a member of the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, the STEM ADVANCE Fellow from the new hire's college, a member of the Women's Faculty Network, and a dedicated faculty mentor.
- The Recruitment team is proactively developing a robust, comprehensive recruitment plan to be required of all STEM search committees for AY 2013-2014 (year two of the ADVANCE grant):



- Meetings were held on March 22 (with STEM Fellows), March 28 (with AAO Officer), and on April 4 (with STEM Chair Fellows).
- Interviews with all STEM search committee and department chairs will be conducted in late spring to early summer 2013 to determine what additional resources or assistance are most needed to enhance ADVANCE initiatives in recruitment and hiring.
- Venues for outreach and advertisement will be identified and included in recruitment information; search committees will be required to include several such venues in their plans.
- Language highlighting ADVANCE at UTPA and our unique student population will be developed to be included in job advertisements for AY 2013-2014.

B2. ADVANCEMENT INITIATIVE

Personnel: Marie Mora, Vice Provost Fellow; Rebecca Mitchell, Vice Provost Fellow; Danika Brown, Associate Professor of English and Director for Undergraduate Research & Service Learning (See Appendix A for list of team members).

- The inaugural UTPA ADVANCE Leadership Institute was developed and implemented. The curriculum focuses on women's issues and challenges in higher education leadership with mentoring as a key component. See Appendix M for more information.
- Applications for the inaugural ADVANCE Leadership Institute were received and vetted, and participants were selected in January 2013. Of the 21 faculty members accepted to the program, 15 are woman (71%) and 8 faculty are from STEM departments (38%).
- The Institute was launched on February 14, 2013 with a kickoff event featuring author and former CNN Executive Vice President Gail Evans, which was covered by local media (See Appendix N). A story on the event was disseminated electronically to all UTPA faculty and staff and is posted on the UTPA website ([Advance Leadership Opportunities for Female Faculty](#)). The story was also circulated through several local and national media outlets and list-servs including the list-serv of the American Society of Hispanic Economists, and in a "people story" that aired on KVEO News Channel 23 in the Rio Grande Valley ([KVEO News](#)). Four of the eight workshops have already been held, and the Institute will continue with the remaining four workshops until April 26, 2013.
- A STEM ADVANCE Graduate Assistant Support Program was developed and applications were vetted. Five women faculty in STEM fields were awarded graduate



research assistants to support their research for the spring and summer of 2013. See Appendices O and P for more information and the list of recipients.

- ADVANCE funds were used to support Undergraduate Research Initiative (URI) grants for 7 female STEM faculty members. The applications were submitted and vetted through a competitive process administrated by the Office of Undergraduate Research and Service Learning. See Appendix P for the list of recipients and projects funded.
- ADVANCE funds were awarded to 2 female STEM faculty members during Fall 2012 to enhance their skills in teaching and/or research/scholarship. The applications were submitted and vetted through a competitive process, which was administered by the Faculty Development Council (FDC). We anticipate funding additional ADVANCE-related FDC grants in the Spring application round, which ended on March 25; the FDC will begin reviewing these applications in early April 2013. See Appendix P for the list of recipients and projects funded.
- ADVANCE funds were awarded to 3 female STEM faculty members to support their research. Applications were submitted and vetted through a competitive process administered by the Faculty Research Council (FRC). See Appendix P for the list of recipients and projects funded.
- Research and Grant development workshops have been presented for all new faculty as part of our campus-wide New Faculty Support Program; a 4-hour workshop on Grant Development was conducted by the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects on February 15th, with 1-hour follow-up sessions on writing successful proposals (February 26) and building research collaborations (March 19). A total of 68 faculty members (44% women) have participated in this series with 32 faculty coming from the STEM departments (25% women). Based on the positive feedback from these sessions, we will be expanding the series in AY 2013-2014, with coordinated efforts to reach all faculty; especially women in STEM areas. We are also working on the creation of interdisciplinary writing support groups for research and grant writing.
- The program for ADVANCE Administrative Fellows is in development for Fall 2013.

B3. POLICY & CLIMATE INITIATIVE

Personnel: Dora Saavedra, Associate Professor of Communication and former Chair of the Faculty Senate; Cristina Villalobos, Associate Professor of Mathematics and Director of the [Center of Excellence in STEM](#) (see Appendix A for list of team members).

- A joint ADVANCE-Faculty Senate team was composed (with representation from all seven academic colleges) and appointed to carry out this initiative.



- The team has identified policies to be developed and/or revised, and established benchmarks and timelines. Policies of focus include Spousal Hire/Dual Career, tenure (e.g., clock stoppage), Workload (Course Banking, Modified Instructional Duties, etc.), and Authorized Leave (Maternity/Paternity Leave, Sick Leave, etc.). See the Timeline in Appendix B for more information.
- Work continues with both the Social Science Study Component and the Education and Empowerment components to measure campus climate and develop ideas for climate improvement. Information provided by resigning faculty, via exit surveys and interviews, is being reviewed.

B4. EDUCATION & EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE

Personnel: Marie Mora, Vice Provost Fellow (see Appendix A for list of team members).

- A team has been established (with representation from all seven academic colleges) and appointed to carry out this initiative. The first meeting was held on February 4, 2013, in conjunction with the Internal Advisory Board meeting. The team met again on March 20, 2013.
- Presentations about the ADVANCE project and gender diversity were made to various campus groups within and outside of the STEM fields, including department chairs, Academic Affairs Executive team, Faculty Senate, the University Council, among others.
- A seminar conducted by Aida Hurtado, Professor and Chair of the Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, was held on February 22, 2013, entitled, “Increasing Female Faculty Representation and Advancement Strategies for Success” (see Appendix S).
- A workshop, “Rethinking Mentoring: How to Build Communities of Inclusion Support and Accountability,” with Guest Speaker Kerry Ann Rockquemore from the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity, is scheduled for April 11, 2013. Invitations have been sent to the following groups: Academic Affairs Leadership Team, New Academic Leaders Support Program participants, 2012-13 Mentor Support Program participants, ADVANCE Leadership Institute Mentors, and the Education and Empowerment Component Team (see Appendix U).
- The Women’s Faculty Network (WFN) was established in Fall 2012. The purpose of the WFN is to increase networking and communication opportunities for UTPA female faculty members, gather feedback on the project initiatives, and disseminate information on professional development and research opportunities (especially those that might be of particular interest to women). The WFN has established an email contact list and plans for a listserv are in development.



- A kick-off Merienda was held on December 6, 2012, which was attended by 43 women (see Appendix Q for more information).
- The WFN has met with 7 faculty candidates, in cooperation with the Recruitment component team (see Appendix L).
- WFN Breakfast with guest speaker Gail Evans was held on February 14, 2013, with a total of 24 women faculty in attendance (see Appendix R).
- WFN Talk and Merienda with guest speaker Aida Hurtado, Professor and Chair of the Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, was held on February 22, 2013. A total of 27 female faculty attended (see Appendix T).
- Workshops and seminars are in development for 2013-2014.
- To enhance opportunities for networking, mentoring, and professional development, we joined the American Association of University Women (AAUW) in March 2013; more information about the AAUW can be found at <http://www.aauw.org/membership/>. We expect to start accessing the AAUW programs and resources in the Fall 2013 semester. We have also registered with a few related online resources, such as the ADVANCE Implementation Network (AIM) list-serve coordinated out of Washington State University.

B5. SOCIAL SCIENCE STUDY INITIATIVE

Personnel: Dr. Jessica Lavariega-Monforti, Associate Professor of Political Science and Assistant Dean of Social & Behavioral Sciences; Dr. Margaret Graham, Associate Professor of Sociology & Anthropology was added to the senior personnel list to replace Dr. Igor Ryabov, who was not able to serve on the ADVANCE team due to other commitments.

Part 1: Climate Surveys (quantitative study)

- IRB approval was obtained in early Fall of 2012.
- The baseline climate survey was completed in the Fall of 2012 and includes:
 - Campus Climate Survey (sent to all faculty), which was administered on-line from October 23, 2012 to November 19, 2012 (see Appendix V for a copy of the survey).



- The Leaders' Survey (for all leaders in Academic Affairs, which was administered to STEM Deans and Chairs on October 19, 2012, and then to all members of the Academic Affairs Leadership Team (AALT) at its November 6, 2012 meeting (see Appendix W for a copy of the survey).
- The results from the baseline climate surveys have been organized into executive reports and are currently being analyzed. See Appendices Z and AA for copies of the executive reports.

Part 2: Interviews (qualitative study)

- IRB approval was obtained in early Spring of 2013.
- All female and Hispanic STEM faculty have been invited to participate (see Appendix X for a sample invitation letter). Field work will begin on April 26th and continue for approximately one month.

III. INITIAL CHALLENGES AND ACTIONS TAKEN

- Coordination among the sizeable number of people working on the project, including coordination of recruitment efforts for the approximately 25 current new faculty searches. To address this issue, Dr. Mora, and then Drs. Lowe and Huq (as detailed on p. 1), were hired as ADVANCE Fellows to coordinate efforts at the university and college levels respectively. In addition, key active personnel are being supported through a stipend and release time to ensure they have the time and resources to dedicate to project activities.
- Moderate-level faculty participation in the campus climate survey (29%) may indicate a lack of interest or of desire to participate, or a lack of information about the importance of the Social Science Study component. Although these types of online surveys generally tend to result in low response rates, we will develop strategies to incentivize participation.
- As detailed in section B.1., by the time we received the award and had the organizational structure in place for the project, the faculty recruitment cycle and position advertising had already been initiated at UTPA. Consequently, we were not able to use all the ADVANCE resources to enhance the advertisement/outreach stage, including travel to recruit at major conferences. We have been using those resources in this first year of the ADVANCE grant to enhance the remaining stages of the search process, namely the interview and offer stages.
- While our two Fellows in the STEM colleges (Hasina Huq, COECS, and Kristine Lowe, COSM) were an invaluable resource for communicating with search committees during the recruitment process, we realized that because they were not part of the leadership in the colleges, they were unable to advocate for ADVANCE goals at the Executive



Committee and chair levels. We therefore identified two advocates at the Chair level, Andras Balogh (Chair of Mathematics) and Rajiv Nambiar (Chair of Manufacturing Engineering) who will, as ADVANCE Fellows, serve as part of the Recruitment implementation team and act as advocates and trainers for recruitment strategies at their respective colleges and across the university.

- Also, we were not able to have the full formal training (which we had proposed for search committees) developed and completed for this year's hiring cycle. Instead, we met with the search committees and explained/discussed gender diversity status and issues at UTPA, strategies for addressing those issues and for effective recruitment, project goals, and project initiatives. In addition, Esmeralda Guerra, the University EO/AA officer, met with all members of search committees and reviewed the recruitment process, as well as equal opportunity and nondiscrimination rules.
- The slow pace of institutional policy change and the long approval process is a challenge for the Policy and Climate component. UTPA has a strong faculty-shared governance structure and the creation or revision of faculty-related policies is facilitated through the Faculty Senate. As a first step in meeting this challenge, we have developed a timeline prioritizing policies for revision. The Policy and Climate team will seek input and assistance from the Women's Faculty Network in this endeavor. Additionally, as noted in section B.3, the Policy and Climate team leader will work closely with the Senate Chair and members of the Faculty Senate Executive committee, which should expedite policies through the approval process.
- Because of the small number of women faculty in STEM fields at UTPA, we face a challenge in ensuring that they are not overburdened with service or committee work related to the ADVANCE grant. To help ensure their involvement, and to enhance the goals of the ADVANCE grant, we have created programs (like the ADVANCE Fellows) and provided funding and/or teaching-release-time opportunities to incentivize their participation. We further expect, as we begin to reach our ADVANCE benchmarks in recruitment and advancement, that the pool of women will grow.
- Another challenge is internal resistance to ADVANCE goals, whether in the form of policy changes or through programs geared to women or STEM women only. We are addressing this challenge through increased education and communication at all levels of faculty and leadership. The upcoming search committees and chairs training will also be helpful. Based on advice gleaned from the last NSF ADVANCE meeting/workshop, we also plan to train internal trainers. Best practices suggest that hearing information from one's own colleagues helps mitigate faculty resistance.
- An additional challenge has been working with the STEM search committees to schedule meetings between female job candidates and representatives from the Women's Faculty Network. In some cases, we were notified at the last minute of the search committee's requests to meet with the WFN, which created some difficulties in confirming the attendance of WFN representatives and reserving the meeting space. We



are developing methods to streamline these meetings in future job searches, such as having designated time-slots when search committees can expect WFN representatives to be available to meet with job candidates.

IV. PROJECT TIMELINE

An ADVANCE Activity Implementation Timeline was developed and finalized in March 2013. Major initiative benchmarks for the project activities are outlined over the five-year course of the grant, along with team leaders responsible for each benchmark. See Appendix B for the complete timeline.

V. PROJECT EVALUATION & PLAN

During the first six months of project implementation, the internal evaluator (Dr. Robert Wrinkle, Director of the UTPA Center for Survey Research) and the external evaluator (Dr. Melissa R. Michelson, Professor of Political Science at Menlo College, California) were selected and agreed to serve. More information on the evaluators, including their relevant expertise and CVs, can be found in the original proposal. In addition, the internal and external evaluators worked with the ADVANCE leadership team to determine assessment data needs and timelines for deliverables. To ensure consistent and timely progress towards the UTPA ADVANCE plan goals, collection of various data requested by the internal and external evaluators is in progress.

Data will be collected and maintained in a database dedicated solely to institutional transformation indicators. Baseline data will be reported in the first annual report, and subsequent annual reports will include baseline comparison analyses (see Appendix Y for baseline data). Collection of all assessment data will be completed and delivered to the evaluation team (including internal and external evaluators) by May 31 of each academic year. This will include the climate and interview data to be collected by the Social Science Study leaders. Table 1(Appendix BB) summarizes the overall benchmarks and assessment data in relation to the ADVANCE project goals, objectives and activities.

In the spring of each year, Dr. Michelson will travel to the UTPA campus to collect additional data and/or confer with UTPA staff, faculty, and administrators. The first of these visits is scheduled for April 12, 2013. The data will then be used by the evaluation team to compile white papers and internal reports, to be delivered to UTPA ADVANCE leaders by September 1 of each year. In-depth research reports on resources of interest will be delivered periodically, as follows: Salary in Years 1, 3, 5; Space in Years 2 and 5; Start-up packages in years 2 and 5. For year 5, we will provide a cumulative report and data.

Evaluation data will also be used to prepare academic conference papers and scholarly journal articles throughout the grant period. All evaluation materials will be shared via the public UTPA ADVANCE website, with identifying information for individuals removed as consistent with Internal Review Board practices for research with human subjects. The evaluation team will also provide direct feedback to the UTPA Administration (President's Cabinet) and the ADVANCE



Leadership Team. A final, summative evaluation report will be delivered by January 1st, following the conclusion of the ADVANCE project, and will be shared with the UTPA community via press releases and a town hall meeting.

VI. DISSEMINATION PLAN

Our dissemination plan will include two components – internal and external. The internal dissemination component will include seminars, workshops, and lectures to inform faculty across campus about the gender issues in STEM and our initiatives aimed at transforming the academic culture at UTPA. Through conference presentations, the UTPA ADVANCE website, published research, and community-based workshops, we will extend the reach of the ADVANCE grant outside of UTPA. We will continue to work closely with the UTPA Public Relations Office, which will cover events, create feature stories, and ensure placement in local and national media.

The first step in our dissemination effort will be to identify important lessons learned and appropriate venues for dissemination. The second step will involve outreach activities targeted at the university community. Policies on workload, tenure and promotion, and negotiable attributes of faculty activities will be reviewed, modified, and widely disseminated through an empowered faculty governance system. Electronic means of communication, including a listserv and website, will allow information about ADVANCE and ADVANCE-related events, upcoming workshops, and other initiatives to be shared quickly with a large number of recipients. Information will also be presented to the Academic Affairs Leadership Team (AALT), Academic Affairs Executive Team (AAET), University Council and the Faculty Senate in a timely fashion to share with their constituents. The third step will be the dissemination of the ADVANCE accomplishments to the wider community of scholars at national conferences and meetings, and through publishing in peer-reviewed academic and professional journals.

Given that UTPA is a Hispanic-serving institution, our ADVANCE program is in a position to make an important contribution to our understanding of the factors that lead to successful professional outcomes for female scientists and engineers in academia, particularly female Hispanics. We hope to establish successful practices that can be implemented in similar cultural, demographic, socioeconomic, and geographical settings.