

Retention and Advancement

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Eminent Scholar Mentor Program

The purpose of this program is to facilitate a mentoring relationship between UMBC STEM female faculty and a prominent researcher in their field. This relationship will provide a connection for the UMBC faculty member to the larger scientific community and specifically to a prominent scholar in their field at another research universities in order to enhance their success as they advance through the ranks of the professoriate.

ADVANCE works with STEM department chairs to identify faculty members who can most benefit from the program. The faculty member works in conjunction with the chair to identify a prominent scholar in their field of research, who they believe could be a good mentor. After the mentor has been identified, the chair contacts the ADVANCE Program to receive approval for funding to establish this relationship. This eminent scholar receives a letter from the President of UMBC, along with the chair encouraging them to participate in the mentor/mentee relationship as well as give a distinguished departmental seminar.

ADVANCE provides funding for the mentor to visit UMBC, give a distinguished departmental seminar, as well as spend a substantial amount of time with the identified mentee during the visit, thus beginning the mentoring relationship. In the subsequent year, there is funding for the UMBC faculty member to visit the mentor's home institution and give a seminar, as well as continue the mentoring relationship. It is expected that there will be regular contact (e.g. at least one time per semester) between the mentor and the mentee.

The UMBC STEM faculty member must complete a brief yearly report form. This report is signed by the department chair and submitted to the ADVANCE Program on an annual basis (around the anniversary of funding approval).

Outcomes:

- This program has been very well received by STEM chairs. One chair instituted it for all junior faculty, funding others not supported by ADVANCE through the department.
- The letter from the President was added after a small number of assistant professors contacted the chosen scholar and received negative responses.
- This program has encouraged increased communication between junior faculty and chairs due to the mutual decision making process.
- Two successful relationships have been established thus far through this program – in Computer Science and Mechanical Engineering. Both mentors and mentees have expressed satisfaction with the relationship and find it beneficial.

ADVANCE Research Assistantships

The purpose of the ADVANCE Research Assistantship (RA) Program at UMBC is to:

- Ensure the success of STEM faculty, particularly women, who are moving through the tenure, promotion, and advancement process at UMBC.
- Support faculty who have a proven track record of advancing women faculty in the STEM fields, or who have a detailed plan to advance women faculty in the STEM fields in the immediate future.

Eligible applicants include STEM faculty

- who have a proven track record of advancing female faculty in the STEM fields, or
- who have a detailed plan to advance female faculty in the STEM fields in the immediate future

Within this group, priority is given to:

- Junior faculty who are nearing their tenure review and whose likelihood of achieving tenure would be significantly enhanced by the ADVANCE RA Position.
- Associate professors who are nearing promotion to full professor and whose likelihood of achieving promotion would be significantly enhanced by the ADVANCE RA Position.
- Faculty who can demonstrate that they carry a larger service burden than their peers.
- Faculty who would like to transition to leadership roles within the university administration.
- In extraordinary circumstances this funding may be used as bridge support for a current faculty member.

Benefits include one full-time RA position – salary, tuition and health insurance – for a Ph.D. student, to support the research activities of the faculty member for 12 months. This funding may only be used to support those graduate students who are in good academic standing. The equivalent of this funding can be used to support a postdoctoral Research Associate in conjunction with some other source of funding.

Recipients, both the faculty member and the student, participate in ADVANCE activities during the funding period. The faculty recipient provides a summary of the work that was accomplished with the funding from this award and the impact it had on advancing your career.

Outcomes:

- First round AY04 - four assistant professors – 3 female and 1 male – and two female associate professors received awards out of 13 applicants.
- Second round AY05 - applications were received from two male full professors and 8 female associate and assistant professors. The review committee will meet to choose the applicants, whose funding will begin in August 2005.
- Five of the six PhD students supported by this funding are women, even though it is not a criterion of eligibility, and all will attend Faculty Horizons in the summer of 2005.
- This program has stimulated discussion and considerable thought about how male faculty can be active in advancing female faculty.