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Connectivity Series at RIT- Developing & Delivering an Effective Professional Development Workshop Series for Women Faculty in STEM

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Workshop Series for Women Faculty in STEM

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Abstract

In science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) disciplines within the United States; women faculty are underrepresented within many disciplines including engineering, computer science, and physics. At a large private university, RIT, the ADVANCE institutional transformation project (supported by NSF Award No. 1209115), referred to as AdvanceRIT, aims to increase the representation and advancement of women STEM faculty (which includes social and behavioral sciences, SBS) by removing barriers to resources that support career success and by creating new interventions and resources. This paper reports on the design, delivery and evaluation of a professional development workshop series, called the *Connectivity Series*, which is a vital initiative within this large-scale, multi-year, strategic institutional transformation project. The workshop series consists of programs to promote the recruitment, retention, and advancement of women faculty. The project team developed workshop themes based on the results of a faculty climate survey and a literature review as part of a previously conducted NSF ADVANCE funded self-study (0811076). Project researchers created the *Connectivity Series* for all tenure-track women faculty on campus as well as targeted workshops for women of color and deaf and hard of hearing women faculty. All disciplines represented within the university (STEM and non-STEM) have been identified as the target audience for workshop offerings due to the high prevalence of STEM disciplines within the university. Program assessment and evaluation results are presented. In addition, a sustainability plan is outlined for continuation of these targeted workshops beyond the five-year grant funding period.

Introduction

The number of women earning doctoral degrees has increased over the past several decades; however, the same trend has not translated into additional representation in the faculty ranks.¹ Challenges associated with academic life for women faculty include implicit and explicit bias, work-life balance, and stereotype threat²⁻⁵. Mirroring national trends, the number of women faculty in STEM areas at RIT declined slightly over the 2009-14 period.⁶ In order to achieve the goal of increasing “the representation and advancement of women in academic science and engineering careers,” the National Science Foundation (NSF) has funded over \$130M in projects at institutions of higher education and STEM-related not-for-profit organizations since 2001.⁷ Cultural and structural barriers that may adversely affect women faculty are addressed by these projects. In 2012, RIT was awarded an NSF Advance Institutional Transformation grant. The goal of the AdvanceRIT project is to increase the representation and advancement of women STEM faculty, widely represented across ethnic, social, and cultural backgrounds. The approach is to remove barriers to resources that support career success and create new interventions and resources. Other concurrent transformations occurring within the university include a steady and yet sustainable student-body growth, increased student selectivity, academic program growth, and increased research productivity and outcomes from its faculty.

Background

Prior to receiving the NSF ADVANCE Institutional Transformation project, researchers at RIT completed an NSF ADVANCE Institutional Transformation Catalyst project titled *Establishing the Foundation for Future Organizational Reform at RIT* or simply EFFORT@RIT (0811076.). The EFFORT@RIT research objective was to identify career advancement barriers for women faculty at RIT in order to establish how well the university addresses issues that have been found to be important in the recruitment, retention, and advancement of women faculty.⁸ A climate survey was conducted as part of the project. The overall response rate for women faculty was over 71%. The results were reviewed in conjunction with an objective data review and benchmarking. Barriers were identified in the areas of climate, career navigation, and flexibility in work/life balance.^{5,9} Related to work/life balance, more women faculty agreed that their career had been slowed by personal responsibilities (50% of women compared to 23% of men). Women reported they gave up personal activities for professional responsibilities (66% of women compared to 47% of men). Women reported they put forth more effort and felt less satisfied than men in negotiations and 41% of the women reported they felt that faculty men received preferential treatment with regard to career advancement.

Career navigation issues could be caused by women's weaker negotiation skills and self-agency. This, coupled with a lack of "sponsorship" from more seasoned faculty and/or administrators^{10, 11}, combines to hinder the success of women faculty in obtaining advantageous start-up packages, compensation, assignments, and promotions¹². Climate issues are exacerbated by women's view of the workplace in personal terms, as opposed to a more male process-oriented view, meaning that issues of connectedness, support, and interpersonal relations are important to their success^{2, 13, 14}. Work/life balance through accommodations such as available and convenient child care, flexible work arrangements, and tenure clock adjustments may alleviate stress and increase satisfaction. These offerings can aid in the satisfaction and retention of both men and women faculty. Reviewing the climate survey, the data review and literature review related to barriers around the recruitment and retention of women faculty, two general themes were identified: personal challenges and workplace issues. Personal challenges include work/family balance^{3, 4, 15} and childbearing and child-rearing decisions^{3, 16}. Workplace issues include biases ranging from subtle to open^{2, 4, 17}; feelings of isolation or marginalization^{4, 13, 18}; unclear expectations for tenure and promotion⁴; a need to gain credibility or respect^{13, 19}; and lack of mentoring and/or sponsorship by a senior colleague.^{11, 13, 18, 20}

These findings from the faculty climate survey, objective data review, and benchmarking laid the ground work for the successful submission and subsequent funding of the National Science Foundation Institutional Transformation (IT) grant. The AdvanceRIT (NSF Award #1209115 project was implemented in 2012. The objectives of this project are to:

1. Refine and strengthen targeted institutional structures, and install practices that promoting representation and advancement of women faculty.
2. Improve the quality of women faculty work life, professional development, and incentive/reward structures.

3. Align institutional, administrative, and informal systems of power and resources to support and sustain progress by shaping the political frameworks that impact representation and advancement of women.
4. Enhance the working environment and support career advancement for women faculty using symbolic measures which emphasize issues of meaning within the organization.

One initiative in the AdvanceRIT project is a professional development workshop series called the *Connectivity Series*. The *Connectivity Series* integrates practices that promote and advance women faculty by offering professional development for faculty that relate to the themes of retention, recruitment and advancement. Workshops and panel sessions are designed to develop competencies such as negotiation skills, communication skills and self-promotion. Additionally, participation increases participants' social capital and widens networks.

Based on the findings from the EFFORT@RIT self-study, strategic themes were developed to guide the design and development of the *Connectivity Series* offerings. The two major areas identified are the recruitment and career success of women faculty as shown in Table 1. Career success includes the two primary focus areas of Retention and Advancement. Both areas focus on the issues related to personal challenges and workplace issues identified in the EFFORT@RIT project. Within the table, the target audience for each offering listed are noted as (F), (L) and (DH) for faculty, leadership, and department head, respectively.

Topics such as unconscious bias education and the business case for inclusion play a role in both the Recruitment and Career Success thematic areas. Other topics such as identifying mentors and communication skills span both retention and advancement. The *Connectivity Series* develops workshops specifically related to the strategic themes of the overarching AdvanceRIT project, but also promotes offerings by other groups on campus whose work aligns closely with the project goals, such as the Women in Science organization. Table 2 lists the *Connectivity Series* offerings over the first three years of the project.

The self-study findings from EFFORT@RIT pointed out gender differences around perceptions and objective data related to faculty career navigation, climate and work-life balance. The unique experiences of faculty subpopulations such as women of color (defined in this project as African American, Latin American and Native American women (AALANA), and those women who are deaf and hard of hearing have been obscured by scholarship devoted to either women as a whole or all people of color. Therefore, there are targeted *Connectivity Series* for subpopulations of women faculty: women of color (WoC) and deaf and hard of hearing (D/HH) women.

Women of Color *Connectivity Series* and P&T SMARTS

During the spring of 2013, RIT conducted a study to determine the lived experiences of African American, Latina American, Native American (AALANA) women faculty, especially in light of their low retention and advancement rates both within the university and nationally. The qualitative study consisted of assembling two focus groups, both largely comprised of women tenure-track STEM-SBS AALANA faculty. The women articulated that their race/ethnicity and gender put an added burden on their efforts to advance in their careers. Their discussions centered around themes of isolation/not belonging, disrespect, and lack of trust.

TABLE 1: Strategic Themes for the AdvanceRIT *Connectivity* Series

RECRUITMENT	CAREER SUCCESS					
	Retention			Advancement		
Hiring Process	Career Satisfaction	Career Navigation	Work-Life Integration (WLI)	Leadership	Scholarship	Recognition
Resources & Best Practices for Search Committees (F), (DH) Navigating Dual Career Hiring (DH)	Climate Survey Result Dissemination (F), (DH)	Mid-Tenure Review (F) Tenure (F)	Building WLI Support Networks (F)	Self-awareness (L), (F) Vision and Strategy (L), (F), (DH)	Grant writing (F) Grant submission process(F) Technical writing for publication (F)	Promoting Your Work - BIOs & Websites (F) Strategies for Award Submission & Recognition (F)
	Negotiation Skills (F), (DH), (L)	Career Mapping w/Network Plan (F)	Exploring the WLI Dept. Level Dialogue & Best Practices (DH)	Career Coaching (L), (F) Collaborators& Assembling a Winning Team (L), (F)	Publication process (F) The changing funding environment (F) Project management (F)	Awards Study and Supporting Actions (F), (DH)
	Retaining Female Faculty (DH)	Student Teaching Evaluations and Women Faculty (F)				
	Improving Department Climate (DH), (F)					
Identifying Mentors and Defining Success in these Relationships (F), (DH)						
Communication Skills (L), (F)						
Implicit Bias Education (F), (DH)						
Business Case for Inclusion (L), (F), (DH)						

KEY: Target group for offering: (F): Faculty; (L): Leadership and (DH) Department Heads

Strategies that the focus groups identified as essential for success include mentoring and networking via formal and informal structures. Within one of the groups, there was rich discussion about tenure and promotion expectations. Other topics and themes to which the groups devoted a lot of attention were self-advocacy as a supporting strategy; support, or lack thereof, from a faculty member's department or the university; and the emphasis some administrators place on student opinions as a basis for assessing teaching performance.

A research team analyzed the data from the focus groups and used it to inform the development of a series of networking and mentoring initiatives. Two of these initiatives are The AdvanceRIT WoC (Women of Color) *Connectivity* Series ("WoC *Connectivity* Series") and Promotion & Tenure Strategies for Minority-Women Academics at RIT for Transformative Success ("P&T SMARTS").

TABLE 2: *Connectivity* Series Offerings

2013 Academic Year	2014 Academic Year	2015 Academic Year
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refining the Faculty Search Process • Performance Appraisal Checklist: Evaluations, Plans, & Goal Setting • AdvanceRIT Launch Event • Leading Institutional Change • International Women’s Day • COACH Negotiations Workshops • Faculty Evaluation System Discussion • COACHE Faculty Climate Survey Dissemination • Language, Representation, Stereotypes Career Self-Promotion Panel Discussion • AdvanceRIT at ImagineRIT Festival 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch of <i>Connections</i> networking events • <i>Connect</i> Grants panel discussion • Post Tenure mentoring series (<i>Connect</i> Grant) • WISE speakers series: NSF tips, leadership, success in science • COACH Women’s Leadership Workshop (<i>Connect</i> Grant) • Appreciative Inquiry Workshop (<i>Connect</i> Grant) • CRLT/Michigan Players: Navigating Dept. politics • Leveraging Difference to Advance RIT for Department Chairs • Provost’s Town Hall: Leveraging Difference to Advance RIT • Gender in Negotiations workshop • 3 Part Communicating with Confidence Workshop • Changing Organizational Culture in STEM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty Service Assignments: Learning to Say No • <i>Connect</i> Grants Launch and Celebration • <i>Connections</i> Networking Event for Women Faculty • Unconscious Bias Workshop for Academic Senate • Promotion & Tenure (P&T) Smarts • WISE speakers series: <i>The Only Woman in the Room</i> with Eileen Pollack and SUNY Geneseo President Denis Battles • Launch of Advocates & Allies with first Ally training 3/15 • CRLT Players return-Focus on Promotion & Tenure deliberations 4/7
<p>ON-Going: Women of Color and Deaf and Hard of Hearing <i>Connectivity</i> Series</p>		

The WoC *Connectivity* Series serves as a tool of empowerment for participants. It harnesses the unique social networking pathways particular to AALANA faculty and uses the networks as vehicles for career development and advancement. The participants who attend WoC *Connectivity* Series sessions have the overall goal of cultivating a safe space for social networking and community building by fostering relationships, by combatting isolation through the sharing of experiences, and by providing access to critical information. The WoC *Connectivity* Series sessions have catalyzed self-advocacy as a support strategy. It, therefore, employs a grassroots, bottom-up approach to breaking through barriers and fosters mutual support among members. Members eagerly recruit and welcome new members.

The WoC *Connectivity* Series initially grew out of the findings of the focus groups. The garden of ideas to promote the increased retention and advancement of AALANA faculty continues to

grow and evolve, as each individual WoC *Connectivity* Series session becomes fertile ground for the harvesting of further insight into the population it serves.

P&T SMARTS is an outgrowth of the WoC *Connectivity* Series and was funded through a competitive mini-grant administered through the university's AdvanceRIT program called Connect Grants. . This program provides informal mentoring and guidance to new and/or inexperienced AALANA faculty in a number of areas, including mentoring and sponsorship, research and writing productivity, teaching effectiveness, time management, and work/life balance by engaging them with experienced faculty with the primary goal of helping them develop successful careers. The process leading to promotion and tenure at an academic institution is sometimes fraught with tension and uncertainty. P&T SMARTS eases the process by building a community of support around issues of promotion and tenure, as well as by promoting strategic thinking on these issues. The only requirement for joining P&T SMARTS is to commit one to two hours a month to reading and other assignments.

Experienced faculty members and administrators use their deep understanding of the unique issues and challenges that AALANA female faculty face to facilitate discussions during P&T SMARTS gatherings on various issues confronting faculty, engage AALANA faculty in deep discussion about smart strategies for attaining promotion and tenure, and help develop a sense of common purpose and support. They employ a multi-faceted strategic approach that offers advice, guidance, and feedback, as well as assistance in identifying and using best practices. They also conduct hands on exercises on issues ranging from networking, applying best practices to writing and presenting scholarly work, to building a strong and balanced promotion and tenure portfolio, etc. Their objective is to create a supportive environment to improve communications, increase transparency in the tenure and promotion process, as well as address measures of accountability that may lead to a sustainable pipeline for success and a stronger community of professors and scholars.

The key focus of P&T SMARTS is the mentoring of AALANA women faculty. The university's overall faculty mentoring program and initiatives did not deliberately capture and address the unique needs and experiences of those who are at the intersection of gender and race/ethnicity. Therefore, there was a need to establish mentoring programs that take the unique circumstances of STEM-SBS female AALANA faculty into consideration and give voice to this faculty subpopulation. The P&T SMARTS model specifies that the participants develop a strategic mentoring plan. In addition to availing themselves of mentoring that their work units and team members provide, the participants are encouraged to develop a broad base of mentors for various aspects of their careers and to look for cross-mentoring. For example, they may look for writing mentors, teaching mentors, work/life balance mentors, mentors from their racial/ethnic group, and mentors from other racial/ethnic groups, etc. Women and men are members of AALANA. However, only AALANA women participated in the focus groups and are members of the WoC *Connectivity* Series. However, P&T Smarts is open to both men and women.

Through the implementation of the WoC *Connectivity* Series and P&T SMARTS, RIT is tackling the need for AALANA to have greater networking opportunities and to have more effective mentoring that is specific to their unique needs. The bottom-up approach of these initiatives, not

only improves outcomes for AALANA faculty, but also improves outcomes for female faculty as a whole.

By examining the characteristics, experiences, and perceptions of AALANA women faculty, as well as the policies of the departments and university, and the institutional outcomes of AALANA STEM-SBS faculty at RIT, the focus groups identified unique barriers and catalysts to promotion, tenure, and advancement. The WoC *Connectivity Series* and P&T SMARTS strategies and interventions address how to remove these barriers, identify catalysts for change, and create pathways for AALANA women faculty to achieve promotion and tenure.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing *Connectivity Series*

RIT is home to the NTID. There are 31 deaf and hard of hearing (D/HH) women faculty at NTID (highest number in US, possibly the world). The D/HH Women's *Connectivity Series*, established in the 2013 academic year and supported by AdvanceRIT focuses on networking and professional development and advancement in academia and engages diverse local, national, and international colleagues in discussion and networking with session participants. Similar to the WoC *Connectivity Series*, the D/HH *Connectivity Series* creation was heavily informed through the results of conducting focus groups involving women D/HH faculty and through the analysis of the results. The first session of the series invited D/HH women participants to develop an agenda for future events. Examples of D/HH *Connectivity Series* offerings include discussions with hearing and D/HH guests regarding barriers to advancement and strategies for achieving career goals, a panel of experts discussing how to develop proposals for external funding, a meeting with the NTID Dean, and advice regarding building international networks and partnerships. Sessions take a range of formats including on campus events and teleconference events using the NTID CISCO teleconference system. This is an important feature of the series since the population of D/HH women academics and professionals is relatively small and often are located a distant locations; teleconferencing allows D/HH NTID women faculty to interact with colleagues nationally and internationally. Table 3 includes a listing of past events offered through the D/HH *Connectivity Series*.

A subset of the D/HH women faculty participants from the career goal sessions (Getting Beyond the Barriers with Dr. Karey Pine) decided to work on individualized career planning through collaborative meetings. Another participant submitted a competitive internal proposal for bringing an internationally known D/HH woman to campus; the proposal was funded through an internal peer-reviewed grant offered through the AdvanceRIT Connect Grant initiative and as a result Dr. Liisa Kauppenin (recipient of the 2013 United Nations Human Rights Award and former president of the World Federation of the Deaf) presented in both an open session to the university and in special session to D/HH women.

Since its inception, NTID colleagues who are D/HH males, individuals of color, and hearing women began to request access to the D/HH *Connectivity Series* events; they argued that they could also benefit from the discussions and information shared during these sessions. As a result the D/HH *Connectivity Series* planning team which is comprised of faculty and staff closely aligned with the AdvanceRIT project including researchers who study the lived experiences of women D/HH faculty, decided to broaden inclusion and impact of the *Connectivity Series*.

Starting in the fall of 2015 the program is using an extended format; the closed session for D/HH women is continued as in the past but a second open session with the guest presenter(s) is also offered when feasible to do so. The impact of the expanded program will be assessed in the summer of 2016.

TABLE 3: Session Listings for the D/HH *Connectivity* Series

Date	Session Title	Target Audience
9/19/13	Kick-off to collect ideas and names of presenters to invite from D/HH Women Faculty	D/HH Women Faculty
11/21/13	“How to Get Your Feet Wet with Grant Writing!” Nancy Forand, Donna Lange and Sara Schley	D/HH Women Faculty
12/3/13	“Swimming With and Against the Tide in Academia as a Deaf Professor” Dr. Caroline Solomon	D/HH Women Faculty
2/20/14	“Getting Beyond the Barriers: Advice and Strategies for Success in the Academy” Dr. Karey Pine	D/HH Women Faculty
3/20/14	“Getting Beyond the Barriers: Advice and Strategies for Success in the Academy Part II” Dr. Karey Pine	D/HH Women Faculty
4/3/14 – 4/24/14	Four Weekly <i>Connectivity</i> Coffee gatherings	D/HH Women Faculty
04/17/14	“High-Level Negotiating and Resolution Building Skills for D/HH Women in STEM/SBS Fields” Dr. Liisa Kauppenin	D/HH Women Faculty and Staff
09/12/14	“Welcome Back and <i>Connectivity</i> Kick-off”	D/HH Women Faculty
10/17/14	“Finding Leadership Opportunities in Academia” Dr. Rashid Khadijat	D/HH Women Faculty
11/21/14	“Breaking the Glass Ceiling: Deaf Women in Academia” Dr. Carol Padden	D/HH Women Faculty
4/3/15	“If you could ask President XXXXX questions, what would they be?” President XXXXX and Jennifer Gravitz	D/HH Women Faculty
9/24/15	“A Conversation about Different Strategies to Ignite Cross-campus Collaboration” Carol Marchetti	D/HH Women Faculty
10/8/15	“A Conversation about Different Strategies to Ignite Cross-campus Collaboration” Carol Marchetti	NTID Community
10/15/15	“Navigating Our Roles as Female Deaf Faculty”	D/HH Women Faculty
10/15/15	“Issues of Equity and Diversity for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Faculty” Wendy Harbour	NTID Community
2/5/16	“Best Practices for Collaboration with External Organizations” Kathryn Woodcock	D/HH Women Faculty
03/15/16	“Crafting the Perfect Proposal: Grant Writing” Trudy Suggs	NTID Community
03/16/16	“Saying It Right: How to Get Ahead” Trudy Suggs	D/HH Women Faculty

Connectivity Series Assessment

The effectiveness of the *Connectivity Series* is assessed from the perspective of the short term, intermediate and long term outcomes shown in Table 4. A satisfaction survey is administered to participants at various *Connectivity Series* events, and the responses are compiled and analyzed. In 2014, the original tool was revised to eliminate redundant questions and to gather additional information. For example, multiple questions related to the effectiveness of the facilitator or speakers were combined into one question. Additional demographic indicators were included and a new question added asks participants to indicate a strategy from the session they intend to use in the future. The revised version can be found in the Appendix. The evaluation tool for sessions continues to be refined.

TABLE 4: Objectives and Outcomes for *Connectivity Series* Evaluation

Objective	Short-Term Outcomes AY 2015	Intermediate Outcomes AY 2017	Long-Term Outcomes AY 2019	Evaluation Data Source (s) / Cycle
Strengthen faculty core competencies and to build faculty networks	Continual review of Series satisfaction data to determine offerings/faculty career needs	Assess <i>Connectivity Series</i> impact on participating faculty's career development	Inform NSF ADVANCE national community with best practice recommendations	<i>Connectivity Series</i> Evaluations (individual sessions; annually)
	Participant counts	Full integration of series with other faculty interests groups and institutional partners		COACH Climate Survey (tri – annual)
	Transition series offerings to other faculty interest (i.e. WISe) groups			End of Project Faculty Survey (summative)

For the 2013 academic year (year 2 of the AdvanceRIT project), survey data were collected for thirteen *Connectivity Series* workshop sessions, with an average of 10 ± 4 respondents per workshop. There were 233 participants within all *Connectivity Series* events during grant year 2, comprised of 169 (73%) women and 64 (27%) men. Survey data indicate overall high satisfaction with the *Connectivity Series* offerings (Figure 1). A common theme across many of the sessions was that respondents felt the time was too short to allow for presentation and discussion. This suggests that either a) the time should be increased per session or b) session planners should be more mindful of the total session content and consider splitting it over more than one workshop (particularly as a number of respondents indicate that the time was too short to do everything, but was the correct length for the workshop). The level of interaction in the workshops was appreciated by many respondents, though again there were often requests for more interaction or for the means to continue interactions amongst the attendees present beyond the end of the sessions. These comments influenced the development of future offerings.

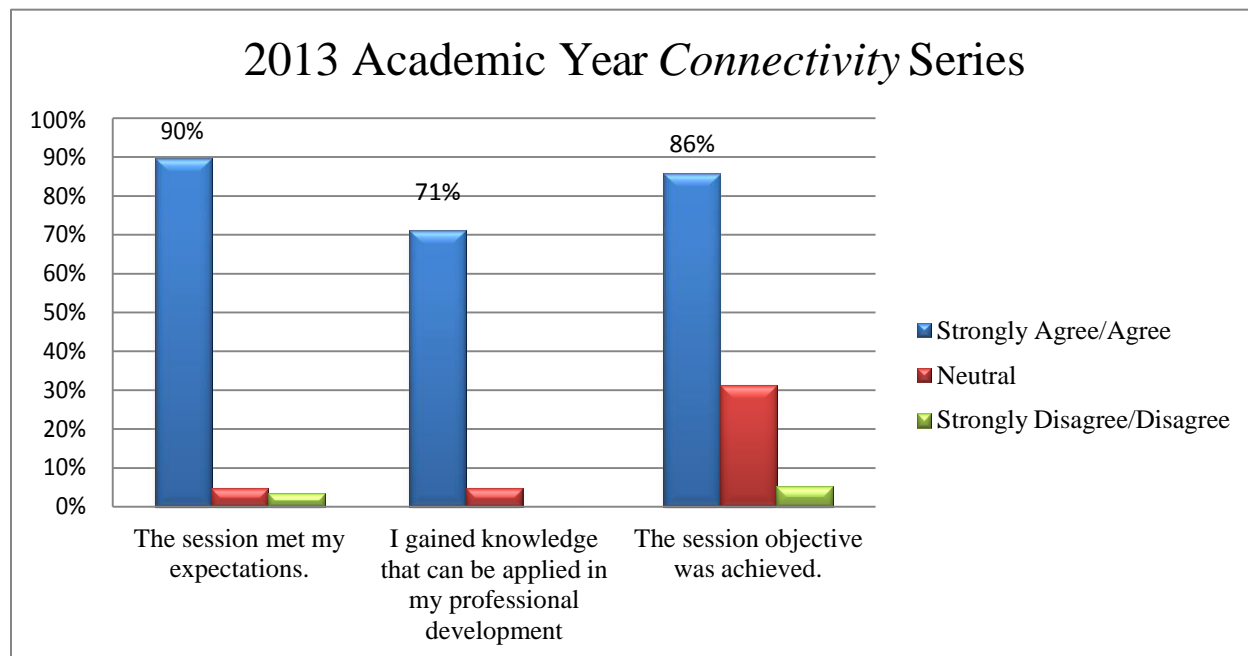


Figure 1: Assessment Results from 2013 AY *Connectivity* Series

The *Connectivity* Series, not including the WoC and D/HH sessions, initiative sponsored 24 workshops in the 2014 academic year, year 3 of the AdvanceRIT project. *Connectivity* Series participation from AY14 included 240 participants, of whom 138 (58%) were women and 102 (42%) were men. Of the women attendees, 70% were from STEM, Social Behavioral Sciences (SBS), or Professional/other disciplines; of the men attendees, 77% were from STEM, SBS, or Professional/other disciplines. Data on returning versus new session participants show that the initiative reached out to more new men than new women participants in year 3 of the grant. This was due to two main factors: a session for Department Chairs (who are predominately men) and the Michigan Players sessions, which were very well attended and promoted to both men and women (in contrast to gender specific sessions). Overall, *Connectivity* Series workshops received high satisfaction scores from attendees in AY 2014 (Figure 2). Over 94% of respondents agree or strongly agree that the session was a valuable way to spend their time, and over 87% felt the session objectives were achieved. Figures 3 and 4 provide a more complete breakdown of attendees by faculty designation for the 2014 academic year.

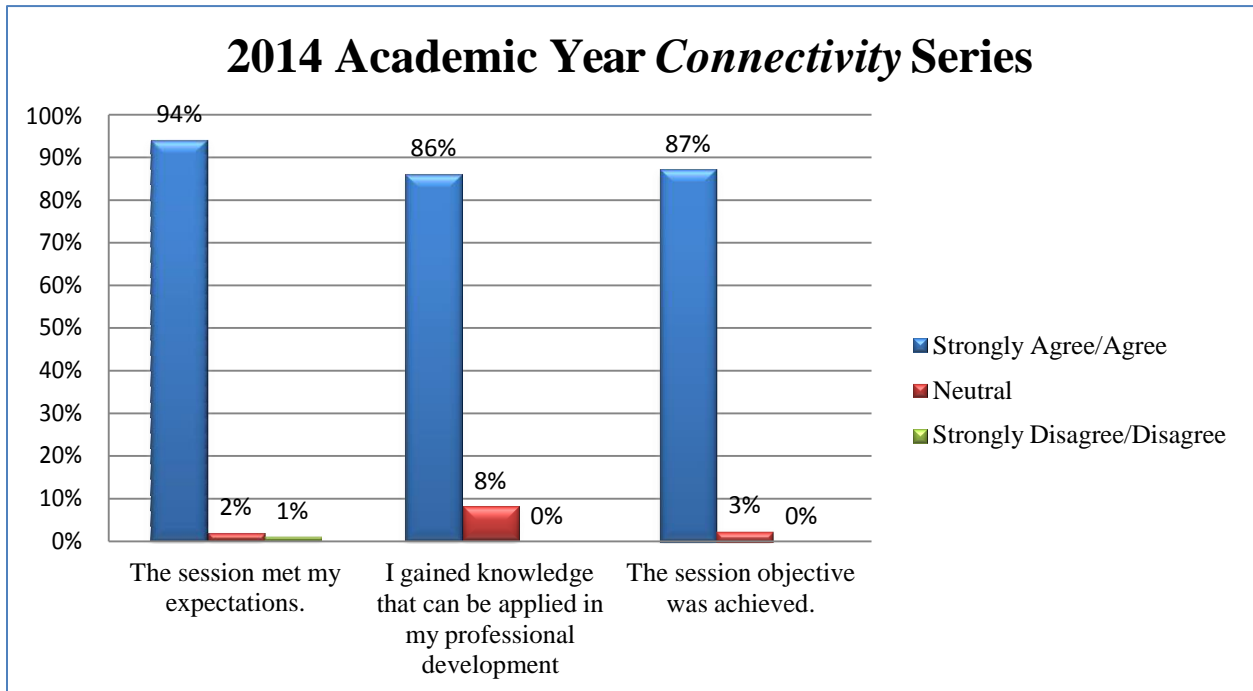


Figure 2: Assessment Results from 2014 AY *Connectivity Series*

Faculty Women Participants by Designation, Academic Year 2014

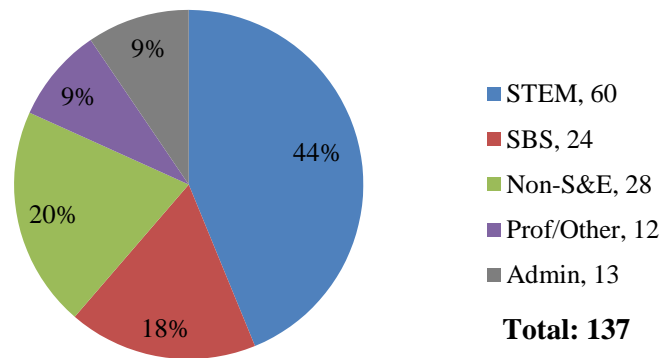


Figure 3: Faculty Designations of *Connectivity Series* Participants for Faculty Women in Academic Year 2014

Faculty Men Participants by Designation, Academic Year 2014

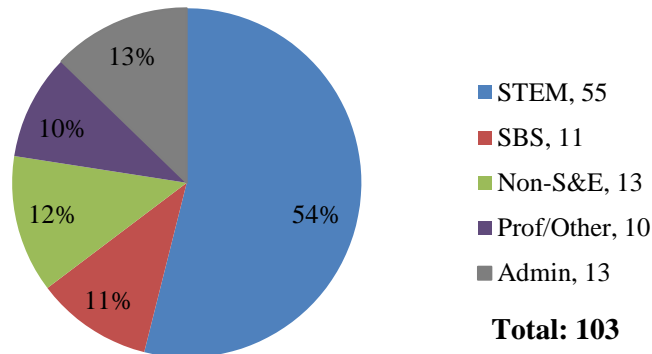


Figure 4: Faculty Designations of *Connectivity* Series Participants for Faculty Men in Academic Year 2014

Feedback for the D/HH *Connectivity* Series sessions is collected via paper survey at the end of each session. Results indicate a high level of satisfaction with the events and have also generated ideas for future events. Examples of Likert questions focused on the degree to which the session was useful, related to career goals, involved knowledgeable presenters, and whether achieved stated objectives. The average response was between 4.25 and 4.7 on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 corresponding to strongly disagree and a 5 corresponding to strongly agree. The themes of the short answer responses centered around three main areas: the workshop was successful, the high quality of the speaker and the desire for the workshops to be longer. Examples of open-ended feedback comments included the following comments:

- Excellent session - just wish we had more time
- Great discussion
- Nice encouragement suggestions
- Looking forward to the next one! :).

To date, evaluation has focused on participant counts and feedback surveys from the participants. In 2017 and 2018, the team will evaluate long term outcomes through the COACH climate survey and summative faculty evaluations.

Future Plans and Sustainability

The AdvanceRIT has now passed the midpoint of the overall institutional transformation grant as it's now mid-way through its third year of funding for this five-year funded effort. Plans are underway to sustain successful project initiatives, such as the *Connectivity* Series. The team has begun to refocus the project's activities from the development and facilitation of AdvanceRIT run *Connectivity* Series offerings, to the support and encouragement of other groups on campus to continue this effort. Connect Grants offered through the project have supported such efforts and, therefore, assist in developing capacity to offer these workshops effectively and efficiently. For example, a speaker series offered by the Women in Science (WISe) group was funded

through an AdvanceRIT Connect Grant. During the 2014 academic year, a new advisory council for women faculty was launched. This council, called the Council for the Representation & Engagement of Women Faculty (CREW), has a mission that closely aligns with the goals of the AdvanceRIT project. Recently, CREW has partnered with AdvanceRIT to offer multiple workshops and networking events for women faculty and will ideally continue to develop these types of offerings beyond the funding period of the AdvanceRIT grant. In 2015, a new Faculty Development Advisory Council was formed by the Associate Provost for Faculty Development. An AdvanceRIT team member sits on this council and will encourage the development of professional development offerings that support the retention and advancement of women faculty. The Women of Color Team has begun to refocus its efforts on activities from the facilitation of the WoC Connectivity Series to the AFAC Advisory Board (AALANA Faculty Advisory Council) taking the lead on facilitating the WoC Connectivity Series before the grant ends and afterwards. AFAC consist of senior AALANA faculty who advise the provost.

Conclusions

The AdvanceRIT *Connectivity* Series has utilized a university climate study, literature review and institute data to develop a successful series of professional development workshops that promote the recruitment, retention and advancement of women faculty at RIT. These programs target not only women faculty, but all faculty and the leadership at RIT, as all are involved in the career success of women faculty. Workshops and panel sessions have been designed to develop competencies related to recruiting a more diverse faculty, retention of women faculty at RIT and providing opportunities for growth in skill domains that enhance the leadership potential and the advancement of women faculty. These sessions also increase participants' social capital and widen networks at RIT. Recognizing how intersectionality can play a role in the unique needs of certain demographic groups, a Women of Color and Deaf/Hard of Hearing *Connectivity* Series are addressing the needs of these populations to promote the career success of these groups. The WoC Connectivity Series has grown in numbers. It has created a safe space where participants have shared their experiences with each other and given each other support. Some relationships have extended outside of work where their spouses and children have become friends. One of the main impacts of WoC Connectivity Series is that two members have received tenure, and two members anticipate receiving tenure this year. To date, only one member left the tenure track line. The Deaf/Hard of Hearing Connectivity Series' success is evidence by the response from the NTID community. For example, a male faculty met with one member of the committee just to express how impressed he is with the topics and selection of speakers for the D/HH Connectivity Series. Overall, the series is producing several positive impacts to the NTID community and faculty's professional development plans. The *Connectivity* series at RIT is supporting the goals of the AdvanceRIT project by removing barriers to resources that support career success and creating new interventions and resources.

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APPENDIX: *Connectivity* Revised Evaluation Tool

DATE:

Thank you for attending today’s *Connectivity* Series Offering. Please take a few minutes to provide us with your feedback.

EVENT TITLE:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
1. Please rate the session.						
a. Attending the session was a valuable use of time.						
b. The presenter(s) was knowledgeable about the topic.						
c. This session is relevant to my role in the recruitment, retention and advancement of a diverse faculty. (NOTE: align with <i>Connectivity</i> themes)						
d. Rate if the following session objective was achieved: • <i>OBJECTIVE HERE</i>						
e. Please indicate a strategy presented today that you will use in the future:						
f. What topics would you suggest for future <i>Connectivity Series</i> workshops?						
g. Please provide additional feedback about the session and indicate any ways we can improve future <i>Connectivity Series</i> offerings.						

2. Please identify your current position:

Tenured Faculty Pre-tenured Faculty Non - Tenure Track Faculty

Assistant Lecturer Associate Full Principal Lecturer Senior Lecturer

Dean Department Head/Chair Postdoctoral Fellow

PhD Student

Graduate Student Administrative Staff Other: _____

Gender (optional) : _____

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