INSTITUTIONS DEVELOPING EXCELLENCE IN ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP

PROJECT SUMMARY

With the experience gleaned from Case Western Reserve University’s (CWRU’s) NSF ADVANCE Institutional Transformation program, a unique partnership – Institutions Developing Excellence in Academic Leadership (IDEAL) – will seed gender equity transformation at five regional public institutions of higher education in northern Ohio and continue the transformation at CWRU. Using a dual (individual and organizational) focus, IDEAL will adapt successful practices and models to educate and empower faculty and administrative leaders in each university to undertake customized institutional transformation.

The partner institutions, in addition to CWRU, include the following public institutions: The University of Akron, Bowling Green State University, Cleveland State University, Kent State University, and the University of Toledo. All are in northern Ohio, with none more than two hours apart. Each has a breadth of S&E offerings, and selective strengths. IDEAL’s objectives are to: 1) create a regional learning community of academic leaders in northern Ohio that is informed about the factors responsible for the underrepresentation of women and minority groups in academic S&E and committed to transforming institutional cultures in S&E disciplines, 2) develop a cohort of formal and informal S&E leaders at each partner institution to implement, adapt and sustain customized change initiatives on individual campuses, and 3) assemble the senior academic leadership of partner universities to disseminate best practices from ADVANCE institutions, exchange regional institutional research, policies and practices, and evaluate change initiatives.

The IDEAL program will focus on two academic populations that are key to institutional transformation: Change Leaders (department chairs and emerging leaders) who serve as the primary change agents for the work climate and progress of women in S&E disciplines, and senior university leaders – presidents, provosts, deans, and department chairs who provide the resources, facilitate processes, and have the authority to alter institutional policies and structures. Collectively they will form a learning community to transform academic cultures and enhance gender equity and participation in academic S&E in northern Ohio. IDEAL Co-Directors at each institution will annually select Change Leader Teams who will undergo group leadership training and coaching, and implement annual change projects at their institutions. These teams will assemble with the senior university leaders each year to review progress.

Intellectual Merit: The proposed project, IDEAL, will encourage participating individuals and institutions to review assumptions and practices regarding women’s professional roles in S&E disciplines, and provide resources to apply those lessons to transform their academic cultures. It will call for rigorous organizational self-examination and the formation of ameliorative strategies based on evidence. It will create an intercollegiate regional community of learners, researchers, and leaders to share information and ideas on achieving improved gender participation and equity in academic S&E. IDEAL will allow dissemination of ideas and practices from NSF ADVANCE institutions and allow further exploration of how to engender effective transformational change at universities.

Broader Impact: Systemic change to achieve equity for women and underrepresented minorities in S&E disciplines must be rooted on individual campuses, but must also propagate among institutions and systems of higher education. IDEAL is positioned to affect behavior and policy in the near term at five new universities and one continuing university, but importantly, can position those institutions to stimulate change across post-secondary education in Ohio. Additionally, IDEAL will leverage the idea of equity as enhancing regional S&E economic well-being and growth. The creation of the proposed collaborative learning community of academic leaders among leading research universities will further diversify S&E presence in northern Ohio, inform broader efforts to foster science and technology careers, and build capacity for a high tech regional workforce.