



# **RAMP-UP**

## **Rensselaer's NSF-funded Project for Institutional Transformation**

### **Interim Report**

For October 15, 2007

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

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NSF ADVANCE Institutional Transformation Award 054835  
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Goal	Accomplishment and Plans
<p><b>COMMUNICATION:</b> Communicate RAMP-Up objectives and activities to the campus community and beyond in a way that demonstrates leadership support, generates community interest, and contribute to the national discussion on women's advancement in the academy.</p>	<p>A report on Ramp-Up Activities was give at the <b>ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP RETREAT</b> held on August 8, 2007 sponsored by the Provost's Office. Attending were all deans, associate deans, vice-provosts, department heads, and other leaders, 55 in total. Our talk was the only talk given by someone other than the Provost and Deans. A draft RFP for Department Change Initiatives (See Appendix A) was released.</p> <p>At least 5 of the 12 <b>NEW FACULTY</b> at Rensselaer this fall are women; 2 are senior hires, 1 is a woman of color. Susan Gilbert is coming in as the new chair in Biology; Deborah McGuiness is coming in as a full professor in a constellation area in mobile technologies; Shayla Sawyer is a new African American Assistant Professor; Abbey Kinchy and Vesna Damljanovic are also new assistant professors.</p> <p>An invitation to participate in RAMP-Up activities was extended to these new faculty at the <b>NEW FACULTY ORIENTATION</b> held August 15, 2007. We used a cross-word puzzle (<a href="http://puzzlemaker.school.discovery.com/CrissCrossSetupForm.html">http://puzzlemaker.school.discovery.com/CrissCrossSetupForm.html</a>) as a catalyst for discussion (See Appendix B). We are considering ways to use crossword puzzles produced at this site for department icebreakers.</p> <p>A <b>COLLOQUY ON PLAYING THE RESEARCH GAME</b> is planned for March, 2007, with special focus on managing career advancement. Possible participants include Susan Horwitz, the Falkenstein Professor of Cancer Research and Co-Chair of the Department of Molecular Pharmacology at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and winner of 17th annual Warren Alpert Foundation Prize for her work on Taxol. Another is Cristina Amon, Dean of Engineering at the University of Toronto. We are looking for a third speaker from science.</p> <p>A <b>LOGO AND BANNER</b> for RAMP-Up have been produced by Nicole O'Neil at Dolce Media to be used on the website and in documents (see document header). It was also used on a thumb drive given to the women faculty who attended the Women's Faculty Retreat.</p>



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<p><b>FACULTY WORKSHOPS:</b>          At the level of the individual, we will be reaching out across the university with Faculty Workshops, both to those who are candidates for advancement and those who are decision-makers in the advancement process.</p>	<p><b>A WOMEN'S FACULTY RETREAT</b> was held September 29-30 at Wiawaka Holiday House on Lake George. 72 tenure and tenure-track women were invited; 58 responded; 36 planned to attend. Due to family and professional circumstances, 32 actually attended, that is 45%. Overall, participants, judged the retreat as very relevant (1.53) and very well organized (1.12) on a 5.0 scale, with 17 or 31 replying. Our agenda was organized around six themes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <i>Social Networking:</i> We introduced women faculty to the concepts of social networking, produced a sociogram of the attendees relationships and asked them to produce one for their departments and discuss its implications. There were a variety of departments: some fragmented into two or more loosely connected groups; some organized by generation, some being transformed by an influx of newcomers, some showing a strong central cluster of relationships. Participants were intrigued and reflected about the patterns they discovered. This activity was rated 1.57 on a 5.0 scale.</li> <li>2) <i>Advancement:</i> Two workshops on the first day focused on advancement, one on advancement to tenure and one on mid-career advancement. Core readings included pieces from the literature as well as Rensselaer's newly revised <i>Guide to Promotion and Tenure</i> and were used to provide a knowledge base for the discussion. Women faculty described their situation with regard to advancement and discussed the issues. Key senior women faculty joined each group to provide advice and knowledge about the process. These activities were rated 1.86 (mid-career) and 1.56 (tenure) on a 5.0 scale.</li> <li>3) <i>Strategies:</i> Two additional workshops on the first day focused on negotiation and juggling work and life. They were organized in the same way as the advancement workshops. These activities were rated 1.38 (negotiation) and 1.86 (juggling) on a 5.0 scale.</li> <li>4) <i>Agenda for Action:</i> Each workshop designated a working group to produce a skit that would communicate the essential themes of the discussion. Groups worked Saturday evening to write the skits and they were performed in the closing session on Sunday to which the two new faculty coaches, one in Engineering and one in Science, were invited. They proved to be an excellent icebreaker and a pointed communication tool. The subsequent discussion with the faculty coaches was lively and thoughtful. This activity was rated 1.27 on a 5.0 scale.</li> <li>5) <i>Re-Creation:</i> Wiawaka, which was founded in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a retreat for working women, provided ample resources for re-creation: hiking trails, waterfront, paddle boats, and numerous places indoors and out to sit and chat. An afternoon yoga class and morning stretching class, provided gratis by a woman looking to expand her business, were particularly well-received. This activity was rated 1.33 on a 5.0 scale.</li> </ol> <p><b>A WORKSHOP ON ADVANCEMENT FOR DEPARTMENT HEADS</b> is being planned for later this semester. We will try to arrange for the skits produced at the retreat to be performed as a stimulus to discussion; we are also hoping to bring the Institute Promotion &amp; Tenure Committee into dialogue with the heads to address the bottleneck to advancement that appears to occur at the department level.</p> <p>The <b>SECOND ANNUAL SPEED NETWORKING</b> is being planned for November 2007, with special emphasis on integrating newly hired faculty into the community.</p>
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<p><b>PIPELINE HIRE:</b> At the level of the department, we will be “priming the pump” for women’s advancement at Rensselaer with a Pipeline Hire to recruit a senior women faculty member from industry, national labs, or other nonacademic sources.</p>	<p>The <b>PIPELINE SEARCH IN ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT</b> has been launched. A revised ad can be found in Appendix C. We have had two nominations already.</p> <p>The <b>SEARCH COMMITTEE</b> under the direction of Natacha DePaola, Head of Biomedical Engineering, will begin meeting this fall.</p> <p>Debbie Kaminski will search as the <b>RAMP-UP REPRESENTATIVE</b> on that committee.</p> <p>We are currently developing a <b>TRAINING PLAN</b> for the committee to address the topic of recruitment.</p> <p><b>TRAVEL TO NATIONAL LABS</b> will be undertaken in early fall in order to bring potential candidates for Fellowship visits in early spring.</p> <p>We aim for <b>FELLOWSHIP VISTS</b> in February; an offer in October.</p>
<p><b>CAREER CAMPAIGNS:</b> At the level of the individual, we will be supporting the advancement of women, including post-tenure and minority women, through the ranks with Career Campaigns.</p>	<p>Seven <b>CAREER CAMPAIGNS AWARDS</b> were funded for 06-07, 4 of 7 to women of color. Of the 19 eligible post-tenure women 2 applied and both were awarded.</p> <p>Awardees have received a <b>SPECIAL INVITATION TO THE WOMEN’S FACULTY RETREAT</b> in September and will have time there to talk with each other about mentoring and career advancement issues.</p> <p>A <b>LUNCHEON FOR 06-07 AWARDEES AND THEIR MENTORS</b> will be hosted in late January to allow them to interact with potential applicants for the 07-08 Awards.</p> <p>A call for <b>07-08 CAREER CAMPAIGN AWARDS</b> will be issued in December and awarded in March at the Colloquy.</p> <p><b>SPECIAL OUTREACH TO POST-TENURE WOMEN</b> will be undertaken for this second round of funding to insure that the RFP is appropriate and to encourage them to apply.</p>



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<p><b>FACULTY COACH:</b>          At the level of the school, we will be working to institutionalize a Faculty Coach who will sit in on the school-level Promotion and Tenure reviews as a non-voting member and serve as an advisor for individual faculty and for the administrative leadership team.</p>	<p>Dr. J. Keith Nelson was appointed the inaugural <b>FACULTY COACH IN ENGINEERING</b>. Dr. Nelson has served as department chair of Electric Power Engineering and has just finished serving as the elected faculty representative on the school's promotion and tenure committee.</p> <p>Dr. Nelson has undertaken <b>MEETINGS WITH SENIOR WOMEN FACULTY</b> to get oriented to issues.</p> <p>Dr. Nelson helped the Advance Leadership team with two <b>INTERVENTIONS ON BEHALF OF WOMEN FACULTY</b>. In the first case, he worked with the Dean of Engineering on an agreement concerning the timing of a promotion and tenure case; in the second, he initiated a correction of procedures for a third year renewal, also working with the Dean.</p> <p>Dr. Mark Holmes has been appointed the inaugural <b>FACULTY COACH IN SCIENCE</b>. Dr. Holmes has served as department chair of Mathematical Sciences and as the chair of the Institute Committee on Promotion and Tenure.</p> <p>Both Faculty Coaches participated in the <b>CONCLUSION OF THE WOMEN'S FACULTY RETREAT</b> and came away from the experience with a better sense of the experiences and issues of women faculty.</p> <p>Both will be helping with the <b>WORKSHOP ON ADVANCEMENT FOR DEPARTMENT HEADS</b>.</p> <p>The Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences has expressed an interest in having a <b>FACULTY COACH IN H&amp;SS</b>. We will be following up.</p>
<p><b>DEPARTMENT CULTURE CHANGE:</b>          At the level of the department, we aim to transform the culture of the two pipeline departments to make them more supportive places for women faculty.</p>	<p>An <b>RFP FOR A DEPARTMENT CHANGE INITIATIVE</b> (Appendix A) was issued to department chairs in August, offering \$10,000 per department for efforts to improve department culture. Seven departments participated in a half-day pre-proposal retreat and subsequently submitted proposals. Four were funded: Biomedical Engineering, Biology, Chemical and Biological Engineering, and Physics. Proposals from Electrical, Computer, and Systems Engineering and from Management were not funded.</p> <p>We will hold <b>FACILITATED DEPARTMENT MEETINGS</b> at least twice with each Awardee Department to introduce them to the goals and processes of cultural change.</p> <p>We will be using these meetings as the basis for further developing the <b>TOOLKIT FOR DEPARTMENT CULTURAL CHANGE</b>. We intent to involve our Advisory Board in its development, producing a releasable version by summer 08.</p>



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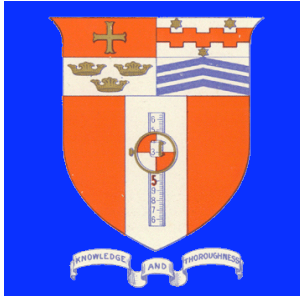
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<p><b>EVALUATION:</b> At the end of two years, we expect to deliver evaluation reports to NSF for each of our first two years of effort.</p>	<p>Work continues on exploring how <b>SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS (SNA)</b> might be used in program evaluation for departmental change. A post to the ADVANCE listserv suggests that this technique has not yet been used in ADVANCE Institutions.</p> <p>We used a simplified form of SNA at the <b>PRE-PROPOSAL RETREAT</b>. After presenting some basic information on social networking, we asked department groups to diagram the social network in their departments. The results sparked some lively discussion.</p> <p>A similar process was used for the <b>WOMEN'S FACULTY RETREAT</b>. In addition to asking participants to diagram their own departments, we also generated a sociogram from a questionnaire the women faculty filled out on their relationships to the other women at the retreat.</p> <p>We want to use some version of SNA to evaluate the department cultural change initiatives, as a pre- and post measure of the quality and strength of networks. Work by Wellman and colleagues may provide a model of how <b>PARTICIPANT-AIDED SOCIOGRAMS</b> can be used to help faculty visualize their personal networks.</p> <p><b>LEI CHI</b>, Assistant Professor of Management and expert in social networking, will be helping us to further develop the questionnaire.</p> <p>An <b>EXTERNAL EVALUATION</b> is being planned for early December. We have been in contact with the Evaluation Center at Western Michigan and Durland Consulting who specialize in social network analysis (<a href="http://www.durlandconsulting.com">http://www.durlandconsulting.com</a>).</p> <p>We are working with Joan Ruskus to plan an <b>NSF SITE VISIT</b> in April and plan to have the results off the external evaluation available for review prior to that visit.</p>
<p><b>INSTITUTE ADVANCEMENT REFORM:</b> At the level of the institute, we aim to reform institute advancement processes to make them more transparent and more fair.</p>	<p>We continue to think about ways in which a <b>BIOSKETCH DATABASE</b> of successful cases might be piloted during the spring semester. At the new faculty orientation, women faculty asked whether there were examples of good biosketches they could see. Having a database will eliminate the need to ask someone to share theirs.</p> <p>We will be meeting with the <b>FACULTY COACHES</b> on a regular basis to identify needs for process reform at the school and institute levels and to strategize about how to bring it about.</p> <p>The <b>DEPARTMENT HEAD</b> has been identified as a major bottleneck in the advancement process and we will be trying to develop a policy proposal to change this.</p> <p>A proposal was submitted to the <b>ELSEVIER FOUNDATION</b> for a regional member-only settling-in service designed to address the issues associated with settling women faculty into positions in science, engineering, and other the technology-based disciplines.</p>



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<p><b>ADVOCACY:</b>          We will use opportunities as they arise to advocate for changes in policies and procedures that will improve the campus climate for the retention and advancement of women.</p>	<p>We will reissue the <b>PROVOST'S INVITATION</b> to meet in confidence with any woman faculty who has concerns about advancement.</p> <p>Interventions on behalf of six women faculty in 06-07 have lead to the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>PROVOST'S REVIEW OF SOFT-MONEY</b> in faculty appointments and a requirement to move all faculty lines to hard money even if this required the use of open lines. One woman's line was taken off soft money this year.</li> <li>2. <b>A REVOTE OF A THREE-YEAR APPOINTMENT</b> for a woman faculty member to address earlier irregularities.</li> <li>3. <b>MENTORSHIP BY THE DEAN OF SCIENCE</b> of an isolated post-tenure woman.</li> <li>4. <b>PLANS TO HIRE A NEW SENIOR WOMAN</b> by the Dean of Engineering in a problematic department where junior women have been encountering problems.</li> <li>5. Plans to bring a woman faculty member up for <b>CONSIDERATION FOR BOTH PROMOTION AND TENURE</b> in Fall 07 rather than promotion without tenure in fall 06.</li> </ol>
<p><b>ADVISORY BOARD:</b>          Our internal Advisory Board, balanced in its representation of schools, gender, and rank, reviews plans, ranks proposals, brainstorms ideas, and participates in leading events for RAMP-Up.</p>	<p>The Advisory Board held <b>THREE MEETINGS</b> in 06-07 and one so far in 07-08</p> <p>The first meeting was to <b>REVIEW THE REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS</b> for the Pipeline Search and the Career Campaigns.</p> <p>The second meeting was to <b>RANK PROPOSALS</b> received in response to these RFPs.</p> <p>In the last meeting in 06-07, they were joined by the department heads of the Pipeline Search departments to <b>BRAINSTORM IDEAS ON DEPARTMENT CULTURAL CHANGE</b>, ideas that then formed the basis of the Toolkit for Department Cultural Change.</p> <p>In their first meeting this year, members <b>REVIEWED PROPOSALS</b> for the Department Cultural Change Initiatives.</p> <p>Members of Advisory Board also made a point of attending the <b>06-07 COLLOQUY AND WORKSHOPS</b>.</p> <p>Female members help us with managing the <b>WOMEN'S RETREAT</b> discussions.</p> <p>We plan to solicit their help in <b>SEEDING THE BIOSKETCH DATABASE</b> as well.</p>
<p><b>RESEARCH:</b>          We conduct research to develop methods to document patterns of advancement in the academy.</p>	<p>Analysis of the <b>PATTERNS OF PROMOTION IN THE 13+ CLUB WITHIN A PROFESSIONAL SOCIETY</b> (Rhetoric Society of America) have been completed and will be presented at a major presentation at the society's annual meeting this summer. We will be asking the governing board of the society to request changes to address these gendered promotion patterns. We see this as a small test of the way that 13+ data can be use to hold professional societies accountable for their role in gender inequities in promotion to full professor and initiate change.</p> <p>We expect that the <b>ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIAL NETWORKS OF DEPARTMENTS</b> will develop into a publication as well.</p>



# RAMP-UP

## Reforming Advancement Processes Through Institutional Transformation Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

### Appendix A: Department Change Initiative Grants Request for Proposals

#### **Invitation**

With funding from the National Science Foundation, RAMP-Up invites proposals from department heads interested in initiating changes in departmental culture to better support the advancement of faculty careers. We are particularly interested in supporting the careers of women faculty and faculty of color, but believe that all faculty can benefit from improved departmental culture.

#### **Rationale**

Much discussion over the last year has centered on the need to transform the Rensselaer culture to create a more supportive community, especially within departments, the center of most of the faculty's work. This transformation is particularly important for women faculty and faculty of color who often do not have access to the networks so important to their advancement. Department heads are invited to develop and lead efforts at improving departmental culture through initiatives that will encourage faculty to:

1. *Initiate the conversation* about department culture and norms of collegiality.
2. Create *icebreaker activities* for faculty to learn about each other's interests.
3. Launch new *social routines*
4. Create new *common space*
5. Foster *informal interactions*, and
6. Seed *participation*

Up to \$10,000 will be awarded to departments to carry out proposed activities over the 07-08 academic year.

#### **Eligibility**

Departments with significant representation of tenure and tenure-track in engineering, the sciences, the social sciences, or other NSF-funded area are eligible to apply.

#### **Pre-Proposal Retreat**

Departments interested in developing a proposal to initiate cultural change are invited to come together to develop ideas in a half-day pre-proposal retreat to be held on the morning of Wednesday, September 19. RAMP-Up will make arrangements for the retreat, cover costs, as well as provide a \$250 honorarium to all faculty participants.

A request to participate in the pre-proposal retreat should be made by the department head and sent in email to Cheryl Geisler ([geislc@rpi.edu](mailto:geislc@rpi.edu)) no later than September 7. This request should include the names of the faculty who have committed to participate in the retreat.

#### **Full Proposal Content**

Full proposals should be submitted electronically to Cheryl Geisler ([geislc@rpi.edu](mailto:geislc@rpi.edu)) no later than October 5, 2007. In no more than 2 pages, the proposal should:

1. Affirm the commitment of the department to participate in 2 facilitated department meetings during the course of the year.
2. Review the history of recent hires, departures, and promotions, with a particular focus on women and minorities.

3. Describe the current state of cultural climate in the department (norms of collegiality, routines for interaction, etc.).
4. Assess the strengths and weakness of this department culture to support the advancement of faculty careers.
5. Provide a budget and plan for the proposed initiatives.
6. Agree to participate in assessment of the outcomes of the proposed initiatives.

## ***Eligibility***

Eligible departments are those that conduct research in any NSF funded area (engineering, sciences, or social sciences) and that have a history of recent hires of women faculty.

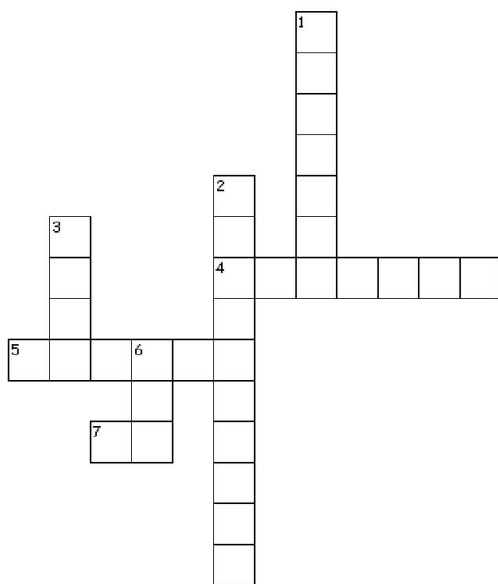
## ***Proposal Review***

Proposals will be reviewed by the RAMP-Up! Advisory Board. Criteria for review include the level of committed participation, the quality of the ideas, the feasibility of the plan, potential for improving department networking, the potential for impact on women and minorities, and the sustainability after the current year. Results will be announced on October 15, 2007. Please feel free to contact members of the RAMP-Up! Advisory Board to discuss proposal ideas. Members include:

Cheryl Geisler, Co-chair (geislc@rpi.edu)  
Deborah Kaminski, Co-chair (kamind@rpi.edu)  
Kristin Bennett, Science (bennek@rpi.edu)  
Jim Napolitano, Science (napolj@rpi.edu)  
Joyce Diwan, Science (diwanj@rpi.edu)  
Keith Nelson (nelsoj@rpi.edu)

Susan Sharfstein, Engineering (sharfs@rpi.edu)  
Jose Holguin-Veras, Engineering (jhv@rpi.edu)  
Antoinette Maniatty, Engineering (maniaa@rpi.edu)  
Linda Layne, H&SS (laynel@rpi.edu)  
Ken Durgans, Provost's Office (durgak@rpi.ed)  
Mark Holmes (holmes@rpi.edu)

## New Faculty Crossword Puzzle



Across

- 4. Whose website contains the Faculty Handbook?
- 5. your best source of information about career advancement
- 7. the word you need to learn how to say - nicely

Down

- 1. Rensselaer's chief academic officer
- 2. the first level to review a case for promotion
- 3. number of years until starting assistant professors sends their tenure case out to rev
- 6. number of years you have to spend your start-up funds

7 of 7 words were placed into the puzzle.

Created by [Puzzlemaker](#) at [DiscoverySchool.com](#)



# **Appendix C**

## **Faculty Positions for Outstanding Women Researchers in Energy-related areas of Electrical, Mechanical, Nuclear, or Electric Power Engineering**

**Department of Mechanical, Aerospace, and Nuclear Engineering  
Department of Electrical, Computer, and Systems Engineering**

### **Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute**

The School of Engineering invites applications from outstanding women researchers from industrial or national labs or other non-academic institutions to provide leadership for Rensselaer's efforts in energy and the environment. We are looking to hire at the level of Full Professor with tenure in the departments listed above. We are especially interested in candidates whose research and teaching interests will support Rensselaer's initiatives in energy-related areas such as fuel cells, power electronics, solid-state lighting, nuclear power, improved energy conversion efficiency, sustainable energy, photonics, energy conservation, and others. Candidates are expected to have developed a substantial program of research which has led to peer review publications and has the potential to attract external funding in a university setting. Preference will be given to candidates that have a strong interest in the advancement of women, underrepresented minorities and other junior faculty in engineering.

We are seeking faculty who bring innovative approaches to research and are dedicated to providing a high quality learning experience for our students. Outstanding candidates will receive competitive salaries and career start-up packages that include summer support, equipment, graduate student support and reduced teaching loads to encourage the development of successful research and teaching programs.

A doctorate in Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Nuclear Engineering or a related field is required. Letters of application and resumes (including a list of references) should be directed to:

Dr. Natacha DePaola, Chair of Search Committee  
Professor and Department Head, Biomedical Engineering  
Jonsson Engineering Center, Room 7049  
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Troy, NY 12180-3590  
(518) 276-2170  
depaola@rpi.edu

Rensselaer is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer and specifically encourages applications from women and underrepresented minority groups.