

## **Adoption of an Advocates and Allies Program to a Predominantly STEM Campus**

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# Adoption of an Advocates and Allies Program for a Predominantly STEM Campus

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## ABSTRACT:

Predominantly STEM campuses tend to have a much lower representation of individuals with non-majority identities and lower inclusion of these individuals within organizational processes. To address these issues, an Advocates and Allies (A&A) program developed by another university that engages majority (on the basis of race and gender identities) individuals in institutional change [1] was vetted for an NSF ADVANCE Adaptation Grant. We, as members of the ADVANCE PI team, share our challenges and strategies as we established the program on our campus. We intend our discussion to be useful for other STEM-intensive institutions as they engage majority individuals in institutional change.

The A&A program centers around workshops that discuss how discrimination manifests in universities and include the institution's own data. We highlight adaptations we made specific to our institution in order to encourage other institutions to be responsive to the contexts that impact DEIS work on their campuses. For instance, our initial adaptation of the Advocates and Allies program sought to be more inclusive by including LGBTQIA+ and staff on the Advocates team and A&A Advisory Board (A3B). Our adaptations have also reflected an ongoing commitment to present race and ethnicity data in addition to gender data<sup>1</sup>. Other adaptations we discuss concern developing the credibility of the team presenting the workshops and incorporating an ongoing Journal Club to discuss the relevant literature.

This paper also shares reflections on the best strategies to direct the Advocate's growth in DEIS knowledge and confidence, as well as the development of collaborative relationships between the two groups and A3B's comfort level guiding and directing the Advocates. We reflect upon

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<sup>1</sup> Gender terms women and men are utilized throughout the manuscript to begin to acknowledge gender expression over sex terms assigned at birth. However, 'women and gender diverse individuals' is shortened to 'women' in many places due to length. Our intent is to remain inclusive. Whenever possible, the terms 'minoritized' and 'underrepresented individuals' are utilized.

sustaining the A&A teams through the COVID pandemic, including cultivating online engagement and rebuilding post-COVID team dynamics. This work describes one team's journey in navigating an adaptation of a well-known Advocates and Allies program onto a STEM-intensive campus. We include some assessment results from the workshops and close with recommendations for establishing and maintaining an A&A program.

### **STEM Context**

Michigan Technological University is nationally and internationally recognized for both its research productivity and for educating students, particularly in engineering and the sciences. It is a STEM-dominant doctoral institution with 75% of faculty in STEM disciplines and \$90M in research expenditures annually (~\$200k per T/TT faculty). Like many academic institutions, Michigan Tech must continually address the challenge of increasing diversity, equity, inclusion, and sense of belonging (DEIS) among faculty and students, particularly in STEM disciplines. Nationwide, the number of women earning degrees in the STEM fields has increased dramatically, yet women are still underrepresented at all ranks of the academic hierarchy, particularly as professors [2], [3]. The story at Michigan Tech is very similar. On the surface, the situation has improved: over the last decade, women STEM faculty have increased from 22% to 27%, whereas racially/ethnically underrepresented (UR) faculty have increased from 22% to 29%. Simultaneously, a number of studies, both quantitative and qualitative, including a climate survey and exit interviews with women faculty who had left the university (both completed by external organizations), indicated that substantial barriers to equity still remained. The barriers included, but were not limited to, gender and race/ethnicity differences in salary, promotion rates, job satisfaction, and turnover.

### **Our Program: Rationale and Components**

Plans to address these issues earned an ADVANCE grant that included three initiatives designed to change culture and systems at Michigan Tech by strategically adapting programs from other institutions aimed to increase professional development infrastructure through formal mentoring communities, support for department chair education, and broad engagement and education of faculty, including an initiative to establish an allyship program. The Advocates and Allies program developed by North Dakota State University was well-established and had been adopted by other universities with measurable impact on attitudes and behaviors in support of equity and inclusion among faculty [1], [4], [5], [6].

The idea of allyship is that majority group members can more effectively advocate for change than the marginalized. The challenge when women and UR faculty advocate for practices and policies that improve equity, inclusion, or sense of belonging is the perception that they do so to benefit themselves. This is backed by research indicating that women who publicly confront

sexism face more backlash, whereas when men confront sexism, the complaint is viewed as being more legitimate [7], [8]. Within this context, allies are majority group members who engage in actions designed to change the status quo to improve conditions for the disadvantaged group [9], [10]. Allies typically provide three behaviors: advocacy, instrumental support, and emotional support [11], [12].

Although allies can be more effective advocates for the marginalized than the marginalized themselves, allyship efforts can also face challenges. DEIS Advocates frequently experience the echo chamber effect whereby workshops and activities tend to attract individuals already supportive of DEIS issues. Individuals of advantaged groups who do become allies tend to already recognize the unfairness inherent in current conditions, such as discrimination against low-status groups [13], [14], [15]. Thus, our Advocates and Allies implementation strategy followed three steps. First, volunteer Advocates hailing from predominantly White, predominantly men demographics learn in greater detail about DEIS within academic systems. This educational step is complemented by the work of the A3B Advisory Board, made up of women and gender-diverse individuals of multiple races/ethnicities who not only oversee the work of the Advocates but also identify campus issues impacting the work and progress of marginalized groups. The A3B, thus, asserts non-majoritarian perspectives to guide A&A learning and outreach. The second step in our strategy is that these Advocates then share what they have learned with campus groups in order to redress inequitable policies and practices. In this way, the program influences the behaviors of faculty who historically represented the dominant voices on campus—i.e., individuals who are part of the majority in terms of gender and race and who had not yet recognized the inequitable conditions that surround them and their role in perpetuating and benefiting from those conditions. The third step involves enacting the advocacy and allyship tools by members of the Advocates team as well as workshop participants.

The premise of the Advocates and Allies program we instituted is that men—the Advocates—talk to and educate other men—the potential allies on campus—providing novices a safe space to learn and ask questions. This requires, first, that the Advocates educate themselves about the scholarly literature on discrimination as well as the data on equity at the institution itself [1]. The Advocates, with guidance from the A3B, then create and deliver a yearly or twice-yearly workshop to interested men colleagues on campus. Concurrently, a workshop is conducted with minoritized individuals by A3B members using the exact same slides as are in the men's workshop room. The program is now institutionalized and sustained on a campus by a team of men Advocates who are guided by the A3B team of minoritized individuals.



Figure 1: Steps in the Advocates and Allies program as implemented at Michigan Tech. [1]

### Introduction of the A&A Concept on Campus

Beginning in 2015, the PI team responsible for the ADVANCE Adaptation grant introduced the idea of majoritarian DEIS Advocates through a campus-wide continuous improvement project entitled "ADVANCE Matrix Process for University Programs," or AMP-UP. Initial discussions held by grass-roots AMP-UP teams led to a virtual meeting focused on Advocates and Allies facilitated by the founder of the original A&A program at North Dakota State University. The discussion modeled how a White man, well-educated in DEIS, could lead persuasive, non-threatening discussions on how to recognize inequities and practice allyship.

During this introductory process, there was initial resistance from women faculty on campus. Their distrust seemed to be rooted in skepticism that an informed conversation could be facilitated by men.

However, due in part to the multiple examples provided by the NDSU A&A founder, the concept eventually gained momentum, leading to an in-person workshop in Fall 2019 facilitated by external Advocates members. North Dakota State University's ADVANCE Advocates, through discussions with the AMP-UP team, supported our efforts to expand the Advocates and Allies program beyond the originating gender definitions. Thus, two rooms were scheduled—one for men and one for women and gender-diverse individuals. Roughly 120 individuals attended the first workshop.

The pandemic delayed aspects of implementation, but workshops have been held each semester from 2021 - present. These were conducted by the Advocates Team, comprised of majority individuals (predominantly White men), and concurrently by members of the A3B.

The A&A program has evolved to include an ongoing educational component generically termed Journal Club. All Advocates and A3B members are invited to attend to discuss an article (or video resource) on a different DEIS topic pertinent to STEM faculty every other week. These are typically held over lunch to increase attendance. Topics covered have included gendered/racially-linked expectations of service [16], [17], perceptions of declining service roles [18], different approaches to negotiation [19], empathy and awareness while recruiting [20], persistence and resilience from an intersectional lens [21], [22], broad faces of sexual harassment [23], bystander intervention [24], recognition of faculty DEIS work, reducing stereotyping [25], and much more. The Journal Club has steadily increased the camaraderie and coordination between the A3B members and Advocates. In the first semester of Journal Club, the men Advocates rarely contributed to discussions, and with each semester, the discussion time by gender has moved closer and almost reached 50/50. Further, in public settings, the confidence and comfort demonstrated by the Advocates have steadily increased and more closely model the example set by the NDSU Advocate.

### **Setting up the Program**

We describe here our initial experiences setting up the program; later in the paper, we provide some additional reflections about specific major challenges at Michigan Tech. As mentioned above, the program typically begins with personnel from North Dakota State University providing an initial campus workshop that discussed both scholarly studies about inequities in academia and the institution's own data. These workshops are then followed by smaller meetings with majority group members interested in being Advocates. Next, the new Advocates undergo additional professional development and support and then jointly present a workshop with the experienced NDSU advocates. In our case, this additional professional development and joint workshop was scheduled in the Spring of 2020 and was canceled due to the pandemic. Of note, our external collaborators wanted meetings to be face-to-face rather than online so that majority group members could more frankly discuss doubts, discomfort, and nuanced understandings while also being able to read nonverbal messages conveying these and other emotions. We followed their advice but asked the newly formed Advocates team and A3B team to meet regularly and discuss articles/educate themselves. The formal training for advocates and joint workshop implementation was delayed until 2021. The various initial workshops and meetings were conducted with good engagement and attendance rates.

Two groups that comprise the program were initially created in Fall 2019: the majority group Advocates and the Advocates and Allies Advisory Board (A3B). The latter serves as an oversight committee made up of women, gender diverse, and minoritized individuals (we cannot offer specific details about the composition of these groups given IRB and other privacy protections). Between Fall 2019 and 2021, the PI team helped the A3B develop a transparent application process and a web-based form for individuals to apply to join the Advocates team or the A3B; this included selection criteria with a corresponding rubric to minimize selection bias and other documented practices to aid in group cohesion and continuity. One key ongoing issue with each year's nomination cycle has been getting good representation from across campus, e.g., faculty and staff, racially and ethnically marginalized individuals, and disciplinary representation. The origin of this difficulty has been a different level of acceptance of the program from different disciplinary fields, which tended to correlate with the overt attitudes of different groups to DEIS efforts generally. This continues to be an ongoing dynamic, which the groups have handled by asking leadership to help nominate and being proactive in identifying and inviting people from across campus to apply. Intermittently, the ADVANCE PI team has taken a more hands-on role to help in iteratively updating the structure and management of the Advocates team and A3B, such as when biases in the advocate selection process were identified. Thus, each year, the A3B and Advocates coordinate to improve the prompts, rubric, and process; this is followed by a general call for applicants through campus communication. We cannot over-emphasize the value of this ongoing revision process. A3B members and Advocates also coordinate and send personalized invitations encouraging people who might contribute to or benefit from the program to join.

Another growing pain that occurred early in the program was reducing the reliance of the Advocates on the external collaborators when it came to presenting the workshops. Much of this was a crisis of self-confidence. Advocates did not feel ready to present to others on campus in terms of their level of expertise; also, there was understandable concern about how it would be received by their colleagues. The first issue was resolved primarily by providing the Advocates with campus data that could be included in their slides, continuing to educate them about ongoing studies and data, and practicing their explanations of the concepts, which was accomplished mainly through the Journal Club conducted with A3B. In this sense, the A3B provided feedback, reinforcement, and confidence-building for the Advocates. Understandably, confidence issues remain an ongoing growth step for new Advocates, but this has mostly been acknowledged and resolved through practice and experience after the Advocates presented their first few workshops.

## **Assessment**

We have assessed the program primarily through pre- and post-surveys of participants attending the workshops and perception surveys conducted on campus. Of the 250 who have attended workshops over the four years of the program, 29% completed both pre- and post-surveys. While some participants did repeat the workshop, based on surveys completed with unique, anonymous identifiers, ~93% of the attendees were new to the content.

Participation has come from all colleges at the institution, although participation has not been proportional to the number of faculty in each college. Colleges with overt and regular endorsement from the leadership of DEIS efforts have had the greatest level of participation. Colleges and disciplines with historic resistance to DEIS concepts demonstrated the lowest participation rates.

The survey was designed by internal evaluators on the project and refined by an external evaluator as well as graduate students on the project to measure perceptions of support for individuals hailing from minoritized groups (gender, race/ethnicity). The survey also asks about perceptions of the extent to which inequities existed on Michigan Tech's campus with regard to campus climate, promotion, and other areas. Details are not included here because results are being compiled in a separate manuscript.

Although we acknowledge the limitations of surveys, particularly in terms of thoroughly assessing the nuanced impacts of a program like this, we relied on them for formative improvement of the workshop content and relative attitudinal shifts. Survey responses, in general, indicated that the A&A workshops were effective in increasing awareness of gender and racial inequities as well as biases that marginalized individuals experience in academia. Further, the workshop appears to have also been effective in conveying the role that men can and do play in countering inequality and supporting their colleagues at Michigan Tech. There is also preliminary evidence that the workshops do help provide the motivation, empowerment, and tools for individuals to support their colleagues on campus. Further nuanced impacts from the growing number of practicing allies on campus have not been assessed.

## **Learning from Challenges Encountered**

We discuss here four major challenges, from the perspective of the PIs, that we encountered either following the initial setting up of the program or in steering the program to maturity. Each challenge is discussed and paired with what we learned from these experiences.

The first challenge was educating the Advocates team. Allies typically must clarify their own beliefs and values, which includes learning about the experiences of marginalized groups [26].



This can be done with direct contact [27] or through other initiatives, such as diversity literacy training that many organizations have now instituted [28]. At our institution, we had both; the diversity literacy training had been piloted in 2011 and continuously implemented ever since. The Advocates team was advised by a group of women and gender-diverse individuals, the A3B, who shared their experiences, concerns, and perspectives. All or nearly all Advocates had also gone through the required diversity literacy training at the institution. Finally, the initial Advocates Team (2019-2020 cohort) attended the workshop put on by NDSU in Fall 2019. However, this first workshop was fairly foundational information. In order to continue to present workshops to others within our university, the Advocates team had to educate themselves beyond the nascent level of knowledge at Michigan Tech. This included understanding the university's equity status as well as the broader academic scholarship on inequities. To address this problem, as outlined in Figure 1 above, we instituted a Journal Club in which the members read and discussed scholarly articles and occasionally interacted directly with experts in the field. They were also asked to attend seminars sponsored by ADVANCE and to submit short articles to the institution's newsletter on scholarly research on equity in academia. This motivated them to find good scholarship to share and gave them practice at summarizing key issues for a broad audience. [Note: We recognize the additional work this program entailed for Advocates and A3B members. The PI team conducted a communication campaign a) encouraging and educating Advocates and A3B members to include these activities in their annual faculty reports and b) asking department chairs to take this into consideration in merit reviews.]

The second major challenge we encountered had to do with tension resulting in part from historical gender roles and in part from the structure of the program. Advocates, who were men and majority members, were guided during A&A training to report to the A3B, which was comprised of minoritized individuals, mostly women. This structure was intentional and was an integral part of the program we adapted. The idea is to have the Advocates accountable to those they are working to support, in part given criticisms that ally programs can operate as a form of paternalism, with some allies seeing themselves as saviors, reinforcing the power differences and the view of marginalized groups as being weak and ineffective at advocating for themselves [29]. The A3B overseeing the Advocates serves as a sounding board for potential actions. This allows the Advocates to understand when they might be overreaching and or contemplating actions that are inherently biased or inadvertently reinforce bias. Thus, this structure creates accountability to marginalized groups [30]. However, in our experience, this structure required an adjustment period on the part of both groups. The organic collaboration we hoped would occur between the two groups initially did not occur; instead, there appeared to be some confusion about roles and expected relationships that resulted in some rather tense moments. With time, ongoing discussions, intentional onboarding sessions, and a change of

leadership, however, this issue slowly resolved itself, and trust developed and continues to grow between the groups. We offer recommendations related to this challenge in the next section.

A third major challenge we wrestled with was how to position the Advocates & Allies program so that it was widely perceived to be owned by the faculty and thus benefit from academic freedom of expression. The ADVANCE team was facilitating the launch of the program and supplying funding, and the ADVANCE coordinator was also providing logistical support (e.g., help with scheduling rooms, etc.). This challenge became apparent after an uncomfortable incident in which the Advocates tried to advocate in support of DEIS within the University Senate business, and the University administration admonished the ADVANCE team and the independently funded ADVANCE program for this action. The administration did not want to be perceived as taking a position on DEIS statements or actions, primarily because of internal criticisms that the institution was overemphasizing DEIS, a criticism that has occurred on campuses nationally [31], [32]. The ADVANCE team maintained with supporting documentation that the Advocates were acting as an independent body on campus, and their actions were based on their own views, not the policy of the university. The timing of this incident was a concern because it occurred at the same time that the grant was nearing completion, and the PI team was coordinating the institutionalization of the A&A program within the university and navigating sustained annual funding from the Office of the Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion (VPDI). The final compromise with the administration was an acknowledgment that the groups are self-governed and independent of the institution's administrative structure but, nonetheless, would hold regular updates and conversations with personnel in the VPDI office who provide a limited annual allocation of support. The Advocates Team created a separate email address from which to send emails in order to make it more transparent that advocacy communications originate from this dedicated group of faculty and staff and are not associated with university administration.

An ongoing challenge has been the tendency of both Advocates and A3B members to gravitate towards student-centric advocacy and away from faculty-centric advocacy, a form of mission drift from ADVANCE program goals. Similarly, Advocates and A3B members have also shown greater comfort and engagement with discussions about biases impacting junior faculty roles than with those impacting mid-career or leadership roles. This is consistent with Thomas et al.'s analysis of women of color at mid-career going from "pet to threat" [33]. While the ADVANCE grant was operating, these drifts in focus were managed in discussions by emphasizing NSF's mission for ADVANCE programs. However, key leaders in the Advocates and A3B directly asked if they had the autonomy to focus on students once the grant ended and the program was institutionalized. The groups do have this autonomy. The PI team has emphasized that faculty and staff have agency and privilege in the academic system as curators of academic climate and

campus culture. Thus, building on the grant-supported work with faculty to address bias and disadvantage experienced by faculty, staff, and students can leverage the learning and advocacy of A&A to benefit the community as a whole. The importance of maintaining a focus on STEM faculty is important because of the different levels of agency faculty, staff, and students have in academic systems. Improving DEIS with faculty generates benefits for staff and students as well.

## **Recommendations**

Based on our experiences in a predominantly White, predominantly STEM institution, we offer recommendations for setting up an Advocates and Allies program, empowering men Advocates as well as traditionally marginalized advisory board members, operating such a program, and strategies for institutionalization.

*Strategically introduce and socialize A&A with the campus community:* We strongly recommend careful preparation for the initiation of an A&A program. It is helpful to prepare the community for the idea of this program with reflections and messaging through groups that have broad constituencies. In our case, we began collecting internal data about DEIS through our AMP-UP task groups. We introduced the concept of A&A—majoritarian individuals advocating for minoritized groups—through grass-roots meetings emphasizing national and campus data and encouraging Q&A and small group breakouts. We encouraged anyone attending a conference where germane workshops were being held to attend those workshops. For example, at our urging, a few faculty attended A&A sessions at a national conference (ASEE), where they heard participants from other universities talk about how impactful and valuable the A&A workshops had been on their campuses. For our faculty, this was a turning point in their attitude toward A&A at Michigan Tech.

Finally, adapting the message about change and advocacy to different campus groups, whose receptivity differs, requires crafting consistent yet responsive reasons; this is especially important for groups that traditionally resist DEIS messages. It was important to acknowledge concerns and provide opportunities for those with concerns to participate in pilot sessions in order to explore and adjust our content so as to alleviate such apprehensions. Every campus culture is different, so being responsive to the variations and histories of each institution is critical. We urge a focus on how the culture of the institution influences the ways a program such as A&A is perceived in order to make effective adaptations to its operation and messaging. Also, our finding that units that had regular endorsement from leadership have had the greatest level of participation indicates how critical it is to get leadership on board. However, we encourage persistence and patience as well. Slow-to-adopt units may eventually come on board, particularly as pilot programs become institutionalized and perceived as being an integral part of the university. (See more on patience and persistence later in this paper.) Finally, it is

essential to keep in mind that a unit not involved much with an A&A program might be more heavily involved in another DEIS-related program on campus, which appeared to be the case at our institution. In other words, different DEIS programs will most likely have different degrees of perceived utility depending on the campus unit.

*Pilot A&A with a smaller group first and involve the A3B and Advocates in discussions regarding the operationalization of the program:* We recommend ongoing attention to the composition and operation of both the Advocates and A3B groups. First, the inclusivity of the A&A groups should be responsive to the configuration of identities and issues on campus. We urge striving for expansive inclusivity, reflecting both the diversity of campus populations as well as aspirations for equity and inclusion. Accordingly, both groups should include staff, faculty, and administrative personnel; people identifying across prevailing intersectional vectors of privilege and disadvantage; and both dominant and minoritarian demographics, including race/ethnicity, domestic/international, cis/queer, ableness, etc. Such efforts to enhance the inclusion of all identities are not easy and can be coupled with criticisms around identities not represented (transgender, specific intersecting identities), so it is vital that groups remain open to learning from those who feel marginalized and committed to redressing such omissions. Many minoritized individuals recognize the representation tax [34], so we worked to emphasize that the service role predominantly sits on the Advocate's shoulders. Advocates take the lead on the work, while the A3B provides guidance, educational context, and advice on strategy. These regular dialogues are critical because Advocates, in their eagerness to act on their commitments to support minoritized colleagues, may not fully relate to or understand intersectional complications or the debilitating cumulative experiences of discrimination and bias. Thus, their advocacy is in danger of becoming a performance of privilege rather than a response to lived injustices. Thus, the interactions with A3B are most constructive when everyone is humble, empathetic, and receptive in order for the educating role of the A3B to be effective.

Second, we recommend attending closely and continuously to the dynamics of both groups, in the ways that they operate individually and in their interactions together. In our experience, both groups struggled at first to figure out their domains and to define concrete tasks and projects. While all participants were staunchly committed to DEIS change advocacy, their own status as a group, expertise, and directions needed to be recognized and refined. Some of this mostly likely represented the typical struggles encountered initially in every group's formation, as has been discussed in the scholarly literature [35], [36]. We learned that setting consistent expectations for both groups and reminding them of those expectations periodically is critical. In our case, this proved to be a daunting challenge, given how our own expectations for the A&A groups devolved during the pandemic hiatus. We thus instituted an onboarding session each fall; it included background and goals as well as time for newly inducted members of both

the Advocates and the A3B to co-mingle and get to know each other. Eventually, both groups benefited from self-defining exercises and taking on self-initiated tasks with attainable goals. In addition, the initial tense dynamics of their interrelationship replicated the antagonisms of social and historical relationships, which can be productively relearned. The A3B's supervisory position over the Advocates was initially understood as a hierarchical and potentially even an admonishing role, while the Advocates are often quick to assume agency and a role as change champions. Rather than a struggle over control, the groups need guidance on how to maintain collaborative yet independent relations.

*Be persistent and patient with institutionalizing A&A in the campus culture:* We recommend early and ongoing messaging to the campus community about the presence and role of the A&A groups as independent DEIS change agents. In addition, it is critical to establish relationships with like-minded groups and offices on campus in order to form task partnerships and supportive alliances. DEIS change efforts are notoriously tricky, entangled in the politics and histories of university life, so no initiative can go forward without allied interests and combined efforts. At the same time, the unique perspectives of the A&A groups offer a strong incentive to institutionalize them within offices and programs that pursue DEIS goals. Our experience with the VPDI office on our campus indicates that navigating the need to hold an independent position while receiving support from university administration has multiple nuances and depends on solid commitments and ongoing communications.

Persistence and patience are also needed to get certain basic but important messages across, such as that attention should be directed more strongly to faculty diversity in this program than to student diversity (there are dedicated offices that focus on this). There can be a tendency, by advocates, to try to do what seems easier or more convenient since allyship and advocacy are difficult work. For example, if colleagues are likely to complain about the increased attention on faculty diversity, attending to student diversity instead might be seen as a solution by advocates. However, diversifying faculty is an essential means to diversifying students since without finding mentors of their race and gender, students are less likely to join and more likely to leave without identity responsive mentoring. We found that messages like these needed to be explained over and over; the onboarding presentation and session each fall helped with this repeated message.

## **Conclusions**

Our intention has been to openly share our challenges and strategies for adapting and implementing an active and sustainable Advocates and Allies program on our PW, STEM-intensive campus. We detailed what we encountered during the introduction, operationalization, and institutionalization stages of the program. We also offered recommendations for other STEM-intensive institutions as they engage majority individuals in

institutional change. Our own experiences were impacted by the pandemic, which slowed our implementation yet gave us an opportunity to reflect and build relationships to adapt our program. We learned the importance of simultaneously making the composition of the groups inclusive as well as setting aspirational goals. We also learned that setting consistent expectations for both the Advocates and the A3B groups is essential as they navigate new territory in terms of gendered behavioral norms as well as openly championing DEIS discussions on a PW campus. Revising the expectations as needed helps the groups move forward and can overcome early confusion and frustration. We found that ongoing self-education for both groups presents a challenge because while individuals may come into the group with background knowledge, there is a need to continue to learn and to ferret out more studies, data, and lived experiences in order to inform everyday advocacy and larger change initiatives.

Importantly, we found that traditional gender roles intruded into the operation of both groups and into their efforts to address campus issues. Specifically, the interrelationship between the Advocates and the A3B was initially tense; through ongoing self-reflection, transparency, and compassion, the groups developed mutual trust and meaningful integration. It was critical to recognize that historically minoritized individuals on the A3B might feel uncomfortable directing the majoritarian Advocates while the Advocates might feel quite comfortable taking on a crusader role. Additionally, as both groups engaged with the campus culture and issues, they had to deal with entrenched perceptions of traditional gender roles and the peer responses/pressures to maintain patterns of gender-influenced interactions. Just having a break-out group at workshops for “women and *gender-diverse individuals*” risked a backlash from the campus at large! Finally, we found that despite the enthusiasm and commitment of program participants and supporters, being ‘woke’ isn’t enough. There is a need for ongoing education, for navigating men's fragility, for productively channeling anger over injustices, for challenging widespread and unreflective acceptance of status quo inequities, and for incorporating change advocacy into campus life.

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