

## **UNC to Receive \$1.17 Million Grant to Direct National Science Initiative**



The University of Northern Colorado will receive \$1.17 million from the National Science Foundation to lead a collaborative national initiative focusing on the advancement and retention of women faculty members in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines.

The four-year project, funded through NSF's ADVANCE program and directed by UNC Dean of College and Natural Health Sciences Denise A. Battles, will address the national issue of under-representation of women faculty in many STEM disciplines, particularly in the senior academic ranks.

As president of the Council of Colleges of Arts and Sciences -- an organization representing nearly 500 institutions nationwide that provides resources for deans and department chairs - - Battles led the grant-writing effort for the collaborative project. Partners will include the University of Washington, Eastern Connecticut State University and College of William and Mary, where the council is based.

Through the ADVANCE grant, the council will infuse gender equity content into its existing professional development programs with the goal of cultivating academic leaders who are more knowledgeable about STEM gender equity issues, more able and motivated to address those issues, and thus better positioned to effect positive and transformational change in their own colleges and departments.

Battles said UNC is particularly well-suited to host a project on this theme, following a national study by the American Association of University Professors that documented the university's leadership in the area of faculty gender equity.

According to the report, "AAUP Faculty Gender Equity Indicators 2006," of the 221 doctoral universities studied, UNC ranked among the top 10 in the percentages of women among those who are full-time faculty, those who are tenure-track faculty, and those who are tenured faculty, as well as the percentage of women among faculty holding the most senior academic rank of full professor. UNC also placed among the top 10 in the average salary of women full-time faculty relative to that of their male counterparts.

"Our success in this arena is not widely known," said Battles, "but it is a major point of distinction for our university."

Battles hopes that hosting the national project will enable the institution to build upon its already strong record in gender equity.

As described by NSF, "the goal of the ADVANCE program is to develop systemic approaches to increase the representation and advancement of women in academic science and engineering careers, thereby contributing to the development of a more diverse science and engineering workforce."