

UC WISE PROGRAM AND ACTIVITIES October 4, 2002

The specific goal of the University of Cincinnati Women in Science and Engineering program is to assist women in science and engineering attain their full potential as students and faculty. We do this through a number of programs that engage women students in activities with faculty and peers to promote their success in the science and engineering professions. This support for women students is critical for both recruitment and retention of this traditionally under-represented segment of scientists and engineers.

The yearly WISE agenda includes four major activities: the summer undergraduate research program, the mentor-mentee workshops, outreach to high schools, and working on retention of Residence Hall women at the University. We have accomplished these programs by relying on the energy and enthusiasm of a dedicated group of professors, matched by the response we get from the students and faculty with whom we interact.

The Summer Research Experiences for Women Undergraduates [REWU] Program has just completed another successful year. By virtue of extensive recruiting, including the development of an excellent brochure, we had 18 women in the program this summer. Organizing this program takes significant effort, which includes the solicitation, recruitment, and involvement of a large number of faculty mentors. The program is more than just placing women students in labs. We have a half-day mentoring workshop, and weekly meetings led by a large variety of faculty and professional staff at the University. We also conduct assessment during and at the end of the Program. Urmila Ghia is taking the lead on this activity, although we all work together to help out.

The mentor-mentee workshops are training for both the students and the faculty who mentor students. Funded presently by a Faculty Development Council award, we have developed these workshops over the last year, and have given them to a number of different entities on campus across three colleges (A&S, Engineering, Medicine). While the workshops were originally intended for faculty mentoring women students in science and engineering, it is clear that the skills these workshops help develop are equally transferable to mentoring any student. Carla Purdy and Brian Kinkle are the leaders for this program.

This is the first year we have worked with Dawn Wilson (Residential Life) and the women in the Residence Halls. We have presented a series of discussions on different research projects and career paths for women living on the WISE Dormitory floor in Sidall Hall. We have already started discussions with Dawn Wilson about expanding this program.

The high-school outreach activity was a pilot program during winter and spring quarters, 2002. Supported by the Department of Biological Sciences, Rebecca German and a student mentee visited several local high schools (focusing on, but not exclusively, women's high schools) to discuss research opportunities in the University

environment. We obtained contact information on over 100 students interested in the University of Cincinnati, and have followed up with those students.

Our success at these endeavors is measured by our outcomes. Approximately 75 women undergraduates have been mentees in our REWU program, and their feedback is gratifying in what they have learned from the Program. We have positive feedback on our mentor/mentee workshops. We have submitted a number of external proposals, some funded; we have developed a web page; we've done outreach and we were awarded the 2001 Just Community Award for our work. Carla Purdy presented a paper at the Conference on Retaining Graduate Women in Science and Engineering, held in October 2002, in Ames, Iowa, and also participated in a panel at the Conference. Summed up, the WISE program has a great deal to offer women involved in science and engineering at the University of Cincinnati; we hope to be able to expand it to reach an even larger constituency.