

**Engaging Men Faculty in Creating Equity for Women STEM Faculty in Academia**

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## **Abstract:**

Equity for women engineering faculty is often considered a women's problem with solutions coming from women to profit women. Campus transformation leaders must challenge the assumption only women can lead transformation and that the benefits only accrue to women (Stewart, et al. 2010) for sustainable change to be made. Therefore it is important to build the case for faculty (women and men) action. (University Leadership Council 2008). Clearly, equity cannot be achieved without men faculty. Focus groups were conducted at Syracuse University (SU) to help answer the question; what brings men faculty to the table as equally inspired transformation leaders?

To understand the men STEM faculty's thoughts regarding equity and inclusion focus groups were conducted at SU in 2009. Using information from the 2009 Catalyst report by Prime, et al., "Engaging Men in Gender Initiatives: What Change Agents Need to Know," a series of questions were designed to facilitate discussion with SU men and women faculty members in two-hour, single-sex groups. A total of eleven men (two groups) and eight women (one group) faculty from thirteen science and engineering departments participated in the focus groups.

Findings can be categorized from individual, departmental and leadership perspectives. Men faculty were motivated by institutional competitiveness, the fit in terms of values, as well as personal experiences with partners and children. Many of the men participants held or were currently in leadership positions. These individuals found that the departments did not hold people accountable, encourage community thinking, nor reward positive behavior. Men faculty leaders found that addressing the barriers for men's involvement in fostering equity is not part of leadership training. They asked; how do they create an inclusive departmental environment? Is my own lack of awareness contributing to the problem? Women faculty in their focus group noted that departments that function as a whole not as individuals were more competitive and productive. Building men faculty awareness of how the current status quo limits departments was considered to be important. Engaging men engineering faculty in collaboratively building environments that unleash the power of inclusive talent is essential to the competitive future of engineering departments.

## **Introduction**

Increasingly engineers are being required to work as global designers interacting with diverse clients. Conjointly, creativity and the ability to effectively and uniquely resolve challenges are essential talents for success in engineering. Research indicates that a diverse workforce increases the corporation's ability to respond more effectively and creatively to this new expanded environment. (Simard 2007). In fact, creativity and decision making are enhanced by diverse perspectives and multiple styles which generate a greater capacity for problem-solving and innovation. (Barton 1995; Gruenfeld and Preston 2000; Hambrick, Cho, and Chen 1996). Universities are no less immune to the changing environment. There is increasing competition for students, a growing international student body and a mission to prepare students to succeed in today's global reality. Modeling a similar diverse working environment in academia is essential for student engineers to learn to be creative, multi-cultural designers and inclusive collaborators. To pursue any other course would make a university uncompetitive in the very near

future. Building and then unleashing the power of a diverse and talented faculty or engineering workforce has become vital. Equity and inclusion are a matter of organizational competitiveness requiring that all stakeholders become engaged.

The assumption has been that gender equity and inclusion for women engineers and women engineering faculty is a women's problem with solutions most appropriately coming from and addressed to women. It has also been commonly understood that the benefits of equity interventions only accrue to women. In fact, "many of the actions taken to improve the environment for women have benefits for most or all of the faculty." (Stewart, Malley, and LaVaque-Manty 2010). At Syracuse University (SU), men comprise eighty-nine percent of the engineering faculty. This level of over representation of men within an engineering faculty is not atypical. Given that the great majority of faculty members in engineering are men, the goals of increased equity and inclusion and improved departmental climates for women faculty cannot be achieved without men becoming involved and committed. In July of 2009, SU's Women in Science and Engineering (WiSE) conducted three single-sex, focus groups with men and women faculty to determine what would motivate faculty to be involved and to identify programs, policies, and methodologies that engage all faculty in transformation initiatives. This paper details the lessons learned from participants about increasing ownership among all faculty and designing relevant programs addressing the initial question, "What brings men faculty to the table as equally inspired transformation leaders? "

## **Background**

Syracuse University is a private, comprehensive, doctoral, research university with 944 full-time and 522 part-time faculty teaching 17,928 undergraduate and graduate students. Women students comprise 57% of the fulltime undergraduate enrollment and 51% of the graduate full time students. Women faculty comprise 37% across all academic units at the University and 11% in the college of engineering and computer science. WiSE is an innovative program designed to enhance and support the professional development and persistence of women faculty and students in the science and engineering fields. It has laid the groundwork over the last twelve years for efforts to increase equity and inclusion for women on campus.

Extant literature on engaging men in gender initiatives within higher education is minimal. Most of the literature concentrates around community social justice issues such as eliminating racial discrimination and preventing domestic violence. In 2009, Catalyst, a nonprofit membership organization expanding opportunities for women and business, released its groundbreaking report *Engaging Men in Gender Initiatives: What Change Agents Need to Know*. Identifying that men have a critical role to play, Catalyst noted that as a force for transformation men are often untapped and even alienated. This report details the results of interviews and surveys of more than 200 business men. Four key areas in engaging men in gender initiatives were discussed including experiences and beliefs that increase awareness, motivators, barriers and promising practices. This report found that the greater a man's awareness of gender bias, the greater likelihood they were to feel that gender equality was important. Awareness was often gained through their own experiences challenging stereotypes, watching partners and daughters struggle with gender related bias or mentoring by a woman colleague. Men with a strong sense of fair

play are more open to seeing gender bias and addressing gender related barriers. But what barriers do men have to overcome to move from awareness to champion or catalyst for change? Catalyst cites three obstacles; apathy, fear and ignorance. Change literature often lists creating a sense of urgency to change as one step in the transformation process (Kotter 1995). Catalyst agrees but also suggests increasing awareness around the benefits personally and organizationally. In addressing fear as a barrier, programs need to look at men's concerns about loss of status, reluctance to make mistakes and disapproval from other men. The issue of ignorance has an interesting twist. Men interviewees in the Catalyst study reacted strongly to the demotivating assumption that men, based on their gender, were uninformed and therefore could not function as champions. Catalyst called this perceived ignorance. Yet, the level of awareness a man has about gender bias is directly related to his level of commitment; so real ignorance also creates barriers for men's involvement.

Effecting change such that women faculty can have a substantial presence in engineering departments and realize their full potential requires that all stakeholders, men and women, be engaged. (Armenakis and Bedeian 1999) The University Leadership Council (2008) found that universities with the greatest success in recruiting diverse faculty started by educating its current faculty in a way that stimulated their intellect and inspired them to take action. Syracuse University's Chancellor Cantor has created a vision for the campus of scholarship in action. In her 2009 speech at the University of California at Davis stated, "the truth is that prosperity for all has been built collaboratively: on the railroads that linked our coasts together, to cite one example, or the construction of the Erie Canal in an era when there were no engineers, just amateurs making it up as they went along. We can only accomplish transformation at a large scale through a concerted effort by many." Sturm (2007) called this level of involvement institutional citizenship and emphasized that it should undergird institutional transformation as a process to establish democratic values of participation and voice as key ideals. Sturm (2010) further looks at the use of organizational catalysts to mobilize change. Organizational catalysts are described as individuals with the "social and intellectual capital" or influence to "mobilize learning and change." These elements of collaborative action, active citizenship and involved catalysts support transformation. John Kotter (1995) in the Harvard Business Review pointed out that one of the key reasons transformation efforts fail is "not creating a powerful enough guiding coalition." He describes power not just in terms of rank and administrative responsibilities but also in terms of information and expertise, formal and informal influence, and relationships. And over the course of time, this coalition needs to grow, establishing a web of connections that drive the change to the outer rim of the organization. Thus all individuals must have full access based on clear organizational values, empowered individuals must serve as catalysts and advocates, and all members of the larger community must assume responsibility to act, legislate, advocate, and monitor. These principles create the conditions where a diverse faculty can be recruited, retained and promoted equally.

Supporting the institution's capacity to aid individuals in conceptualizing and initiating new ways of working, to participate in transformation initiatives and to feel valued for such efforts are all aspects of the change process. Creating sustainable change is clearly a complex process where the journey is as important as the end product. Therefore, WiSE concluded, bringing all stakeholders on that journey was critical to its goals.

## Approach

In conducting an assessment for future initiatives, SU's Women in Science and Engineering (WiSE) faculty leaders and professional staff conducted a broad campus needs assessment that resulted in the key finding that male faculty are essential to a successful outcome; and they were very receptive. One male faculty member said, "Out of these questions I like the phrase men as agents of change .... the majority of faculty are men and for the culture to change they have to be the agent. Nobody else can change them, they have to change themselves and those that are around them." From the literature and needs assessment conversations it became clear that the cultivation of women and men as transformation leaders committed to equity and inclusion would catalyze sustainable improvements to candidate pool development, hiring, advancement and research collaboration for women faculty in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) departments at SU. Indeed, The University Leadership Council in its 2008 report, *Breakthrough Advances in Faculty Diversity: Lessons and Innovative Practices from the Frontier*, points out that a key ingredient for universities who have successfully increased the diversity of their faculty has been their ability to motivate all faculty to take ownership and act. Furthermore, there is considerable research that supports the mobilization of many stakeholders as an essential component of any organizational change effort.

WiSE leaders determined that further information was needed to understand how to engage the faculty, particularly male faculty, in institutional change. All involved agreed that focus groups would be the best method to gain a richer insight through an exchange between faculty rather than using a more individualistic process such as a survey or one-on-one interview. Single sex groups were formed in order to create a comfortable atmosphere for men and women as the Catalyst research indicates that the fear of making mistakes, for example unknowingly saying something that would offend a woman colleague, can reduce the richness of information conveyed. WiSE has also found that women faculty are more hesitant to address gender bias in groups situations, especially co-ed settings, because of their unrewarded and sometimes negative experiences. This approach had the added benefit of allowing the facilitators to probe more deeply for gender related information. WiSE engaged a faculty consultant with expertise in culturally specific programming, gender issues and the use of focus groups in research from the School of Social Work to support the overall design of the focus groups. Based on the 2009 Catalyst report thirteen questions were developed (See Appendix 1). A team of two co-facilitators were used, a woman and a man, to conduct the focus groups. Both were experienced facilitators but not members of the faculty. The focus group questions and procedures were vetted through SU's Institutional Review Board with all confidentiality protocols observed (Protocol # 09-146). Invitations were sent to 115 (out of the 215) STEM faculty identified as a) being on campus during the summer and/or available to come and b) representative of the 13 STEM academic departments that WiSE works with. The departments are part of the College of Engineering and Computer Science, College of Arts and Sciences and the School of Information Studies. One department, science and math education bridges both the College of Arts and Sciences and the School of Education. Eleven of the thirteen departments were represented by twenty-one participants. Participants self-selected to be involved. Three groups were formed with the men groups (two) comprising 5 or 6 participants each and the women's group with 8 individuals. There were an additional three faculty members who were unable to make the group times, two men and 1 woman, who were individually interviewed at their request. The duration of the

focus groups was between 1.5 and 2 hours each. The groups were video and audio taped. At the beginning of each session participants were shown statistics reflecting STEM faculty numbers at SU by gender and rank in comparison to sister, benchmarking colleges. The benchmarking colleges included Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Rice University and Cornell University. These colleges are typically among the sample that the University often benchmarks itself against and have a similar course of study to the 13 science and engineering departments that WISE focuses on. Furthermore the facilitators ensured a common understanding of language by defining the following three terms:

**Gender** - refers to both women and men and is an overarching variable in everyone's lives. Gender roles and expectations are learned through socialization processes. In utilizing a gender approach the focus is not on individual women or men but on the culture or systems that determine gender roles and responsibilities, access to and control of resources, and decision-making potentials. Gender stereotypes can have a negative impact on both women and men.

**Equality** –the rights, responsibilities and opportunities available to individuals will be equal. Promotion of equality does not mean that everyone becomes the same but refers to the desire to achieve balance and correspondence in representation and outcomes.

**Inclusion** –a system purposefully attends to and actively involves the opinions and unique perspectives of people who are of both genders and from varying backgrounds and diverse cultures in its policies, decision-making processes and activities. An organization that supports inclusion promotes interdisciplinarity, teamwork, creative thinking, flexibility and constructive risk-taking.

Demographic information was collected and summarized by gender, ethnicity, age, and position. Eighteen of the twenty-one participants filled out the survey; some left portions blank. Of those who provide information about tenure (N = 18) there were fourteen participants including four tenured women, three in tenure-track positions and 1 in a non-tenure track position. All of male participants in the groups and the interviews were tenured. Four participants identified themselves as Asian, one as other and the remainder as white. Of the eighteen respondents, three participants, all women, were in the age range of 25 – 40 years old, eleven in the range of 40 – 55 years, three in the range of 55 – 70 years and 1 over 70. There were nine full professors (two were women), four associate professors split evenly by gender and 4 assistant professors, all women.

In a concurrent survey we sought to harvest information that would indicate in an academic setting awareness of diversity issues or demonstrate a sense of fair play. The survey was constructed based on the 2009 Catalyst report regarding key motivators for male engagement. In the case of departmental involvement with colleagues such as mentoring and promotion activities that may indicate a boost in awareness or sense of fair play, eighty percent of the men have nominated a colleague of the opposite gender or a different ethnicity for an award in the last year; no women indicated having done so. Ninety percent of the men and seventy-five percent of the women have invited a colleague of the opposite gender or different ethnicity to join a research project. Ninety percent of the men and fifty percent of the women have recommended a woman or other member of an underrepresented group for a faculty

appointment or advancement. Sixty percent of the men and fifty percent of the women have been mentored by someone of the opposite gender or different ethnicity from theirs. Of this total group, nine men (82%) and six (75%) women reported their partners were also in demanding careers, one indicated a partner was not in a demanding career and two indicated this question was not applicable to their circumstances. Finally, we gathered information about service and volunteer commitment as a way of gauging their sense of fair play, access to opportunities that build awareness and willingness to be engaged with others. Seven (64%) men and five (63%) women indicated that they advise student groups. Nine men (82%) and three (38%) women volunteer at non-for-profit institutions in the community. Two men participated in dialogue circles on race. In terms of membership in advocacy or political groups, five men (45%) and two women (25%) indicated membership in such groups. Overall, one could conclude that the focus group men participants have a better than average sense of fair play and access to personal experiences that increase their awareness of issues related to gender and other underrepresented groups. Because they are also tenured and have professor or associate professor ranks, they have sufficient social capital to be transformation leaders at SU; their opinions are very relevant.

The focus group audio tapes, supported by the video as needed, were transcribed verbatim. The names of the participants were replaced by randomly assigned numbers and other identifying information was removed from the text before analysis began. The analysis was conducted in three stages. The first stage of data reduction harvested the content quotes under each question. The second stage coded these quotes by broad topics such as motivation, leadership, benefits, training, recruitment, etc. The third layer of data reduction further refined these broad categories into sub-topics. The data was thus displayed in an organized collection of information that allowed the formulation of data conclusions. (Miles and Huberman 1994) The results are the beginning of theories inductively derived from conversations with this select portion of STEM faculty. Considerable insight has been gained to support strategic design and initial program planning for future initiatives. We have a starting point and a much improved opportunity for success. The remainder of this paper details the findings from the male focus groups with some notable discussion of similarities and differences between male and female faculty.

## Findings

The analysis of the focus group scripts produced the following seven key findings:

***Finding: There is acceptance among male STEM faculty that there is a problem.*** What was obvious to the male faculty who volunteered to participate in the focus groups was that addressing the issues of equity and inclusion was a necessity for a variety of reasons. Some felt the statistics provided articulated the need. Others cited frustrating examples of trying to hire and retain women faculty and feelings of embarrassment at this point at the dearth of female faculty in engineering. Another expressed concern that “if we cannot address the basic issues of fairness and equal treatment, how are we going to tackle the more enlightened aspects of gender issues?” The participants’ ready acceptance and interest created significant energy in the focus groups that could not be denied.

***Finding: A Journey toward shared awareness and understanding is essential in the early stages.*** A male participant articulated comfortably why he as an individual would support equity and inclusion efforts at SU; “I want to be at a place that reflects my values and principles.” Organizational “fit” was important to him and he knew that about himself. But most of the men participating were still on a journey to recognizing and understanding gender bias saying such things as “I think we as men need to understand more (of) what would help make this a better place from a gender equity point of view...” or “What would be meaningful for me is to hear from the women faculty on campus... that would bring it home for me” or “But it’s being sensitized to what makes this a better place for woman...we need to understand what that is...” Men focus group participants felt that increasing awareness among men faculty members about the issues and the extent of the concern was a critical aspect of any ongoing efforts. They were quite persistent in bringing this up and on an individual level citing many examples of how their lack of awareness created further difficulties or alienated students. “I think a lot of the issues that women face are unintentional I mean they’re things that occur that people don’t realize that they’re saying or actions that are taken.” They appeared quite concerned about unconscious bias and their inadvertent use of outdated gender schemas.

In our survey, we further found that the majority of STEM faculty participants had partners who were also in demanding careers and several spoke about their hopes for their daughters. One of the interviewees reflected that he would not want his daughter to be in a degree program like his own department that did not have sufficient women faculty role models. Their mindfulness of gender issues and the need to create a better climate for women faculty and students was evidently heightened by their personal experiences.

One aspect of male faculty concern centered on language and role assumptions what Valian terms gender schemas. Gender schemas are assumptions about each gender that we hold and utilize, consciously and unconsciously, to form opinions and guide our actions. Virginia Valian in her many writings proposes that gender schemas skew our perceptions often causing both men and women to view women in ways that give them an accumulation of small and large disadvantages affording men the advantage. (Valian 1998). Awareness of one’s own personal schemas is an indispensable first step. The Catalyst interviews found that men’s level of awareness of gender inequalities was an important indicator of their inclination to support transformation initiatives. Organizational change literature also supports this finding. The Catalyst report recommended capitalizing on men’s own experiences to build awareness. One strategy was to help men identify where stereotyping impacted them personally or the women in their families (partners, daughters, etc.). Secondly, they found that men who were mentored by women in the workplace observed and learned from the barriers their mentors faced and thus had an increased understanding of workplace gender bias. Therefore building awareness among and between male faculty members is fundamental to successful implementation of transformational efforts. Intellectual discussion, education and problem-solving are central to faculty (University Leadership Council 2008). Traditional training environments have long been noted as often ineffectual failing to inspire action. The University Leadership Council (2008) found that “best practice institutions have learned that faculty listen to other faculty and respond most favorably when engaged in an academic format.” This particular group of faculty are ready to engage in this process with an interactive format,

respect for their time and actionable information. One member cautioned, “But the first one must go so fabulously, people will say I want to go to the next one.”

**Finding: There is a strong belief that successful transformation efforts will improve individual and institutional competitiveness and credibility.** One conclusion drawn from the focus group analysis is that both men and women feel that improved competitive standing individually, and as a department and institution, were key motivators for participating in gender equity and inclusion initiatives. Increased student enrollment and success, and increased credibility were also key motivators. “If by participating in this we can increase our student pool, faculty pool ...I think that would be a compelling reason ...so that departments can grow and hire more faculty members and that will bring more prestige to the university.” Another male faculty member pointed out the reality that, “outside our office, we’re dealing with an equal representation of men and women so that’s a very natural environment. I think what is unnatural is once we come into our buildings we’re all like this (male)...it makes it harder to support and retain female students.” Furthermore self-interest was cited as a key motivator in alignment with increased individual competitiveness. One male faculty member said that “to be connected to these programs makes me more competitive for external funding because I build on the infrastructure” and another said, “there’s some advantages there and if you can point to the very positive statistics on your campus that might help you in even gaining more funding.”

Men and women faculty, based on the opinions of the participants, seem to agree that a gender diverse faculty gives a university a competitive edge in recruiting and retaining students, attracting and retaining a talented faculty, ensuring successful applications for funding and exceeding benchmarks for excellence. They also pointed out that it increases credibility; a genuinely equitable and inclusive environment shows you “walk the talk.” You cannot tell women students that they can have successful advanced careers if there are no role models. Demonstrating an equitable and inclusive value system to a perspective faculty member who is a woman or from another underrepresented group is also difficult when the faculty is not diverse. It is agreed that this is a problem that requires a deep and abiding value system that commits academic departments to owning and acting on transformative attitudes, practices and strategic plans. These conditions will increase motivation to participate because of the direct relationship to improved competitiveness and credibility.

**Finding: Promotion and tenure considerations must be deeply integrated into discussions, plans and strategies surrounding gender initiatives and the generated products.** There was a universal consensus for the careful consideration of promotion and tenure issues in terms of time, ability and rewards for being involved in any transformation efforts. Thus, the faculty reward system of tenure and promotion must reflect involvement in equity and inclusion activities as essential through both policy and practice; a highly prized aspect integrated demonstrably into teaching, service and research. Otherwise, tenure-track faculty cannot devote time and other resources, even if they are strongly interested. “Is it going to be the kind of thing that when you come up for tenure ... is it going to be equally valued.” Furthermore, senior faculty mentors cannot advise junior faculty to be involved. A male faculty participant said, “we as mentors need to advise well ... you’re not going to get the papers out and it’s going to hurt your case down the road.” This cycle creates apathy. And as previously stated apathy is a key obstacle to male engagement according to the Catalyst report.

**Finding: Leadership, especially at the department level, needs to be trained to lead inclusively.** A participant pointed out that “it’s more creditable if leadership acts in a way that is consistent with its values.” And “equity and inclusion criteria need to be built into performance evaluations and annual reporting.” Both men and women participants felt that the chairs role is critical in leading a department equitably and inclusively especially in developing, retaining and protecting junior faculty and in creating a community. While male faculty recognized leadership as important their discussion tended toward the practical accountability and other tasks. Women faculty endorsed one member of the group who said that it’s up to leadership to point to the benefits of an inclusive department, “leadership has a lot to do with it and so if the unit is strong because there’s many different perspectives and good gender representation and the unit is happy and well positioned in the institution... then it becomes in everybody’s best interest ... But if the leadership doesn’t convey that that’s a good thing for the unit then people can tend to be just sort of individuals and then it’s not necessarily in their self-interest to have all people do well.” Women faculty felt it was essential to build a culture with respect for differing opinions and gain support for the desired attitudes and behaviors. Women in particular felt that listening skills were essential to effective leadership. Women faculty believe strongly that departments that function as a whole not as individuals were more competitive and productive.

Leadership buy-in and expertise in leading is critical to successful transformation efforts. Senior administrative support and collaborative leadership are described by Kezar and Eckel (2002) as core strategies for institutional change. Therefore, administrative and departmental leaders need to hone their skills in leading inclusively and in relating to faculty in a fair and equitable manner (Jordan and Bilimoria 2010). They need to be provided with the knowledge and tools of how to create inclusive environments.

**Finding: Effective STEM departments actively pursue opportunities to create an equitable and inclusive culture.** Men faculty emphasized the importance of looking at what is working and combining all equity and inclusion efforts into a streamlined, integrated set of goals and plans that are inculcated into the daily work of the department. When asked to describe their “dream department” men and women faculty talked about respect but women also talked about the importance of feeling a sense of unity with their department. “It’s very important when you come into a new setting to feel a cohesive kind of a group feeling with your department as well as the university as a whole.” It should be pointed out, according to male faculty, that addressing the barriers for men’s involvement in fostering equity or for leading inclusively are not part of leadership training. Simply put by one male faculty member said, “How do you make SU a more equitable and inclusive place?”

Recent research has demonstrated that there are clear sets of behaviors that create a more positive and supportive work culture for women and men. Effective equitable and inclusive departments recruit and develop faculty for constructive interactions as a group that further the mission, goals and desired culture of the department. They organized informal social exchange opportunities between faculty not waiting for this to naturally occur (Jordan and Bilimoria 2010) since the unstructured informal collaborations tend to be more homogenous. Activities that create a context where status/power are leveled also appear to be beneficial to creating equitable departmental climates. With so many women

in junior faculty positions activities like team teaching, leading important committees and well structured, informal events allowed women more contact and access to senior faculty and essential information for success.

***Finding: Male faculty consider the level of risk in advocating for and participating in gender initiatives as less than women faculty do.*** The greatest difference between the men and women focus group discussions centered on their feelings about the level of risk involved in participating in gender initiatives. For men, they felt that unlike other settings the academy creates an atmosphere where there is little risk to support and advocate for gender initiatives. “As a place where people have their job security and constant debate is a natural thing... I don’t think people will be threatened by one of their colleagues supporting an equitable and inclusive environment.” However, women faculty seemed to feel that there was more risk involved in advocating for and participating in developing a more equitable and inclusive climate. They said: “Difficulty is in the power relationships between you and those you might be advocating for or standing up against and trying to see around the corner to understand all of the potential consequences of said action can often be very, very difficult and that might be a demotivator;” “I think there is at times pressure to keep your head down and your nose clean and not comment on the things that you see as problematic...fear that they are going to have promotion and tenure consequences...;” and, “I know that the junior female faculty members in our department sit saying nothing and we invite them to speak up... they are not even comfortable doing that and so we senior women have to make more noise.” Women felt a strong motivator, as one woman faculty member stated, was “knowing that your contributions are going to be respected and result in something fruitful” and the demotivating factor in advocating for change or joining gender initiatives “is not wanting the poor associate of becoming the feminist sort of medusa in the department.”

## Conclusion

*Figure 1. Summary of Key Findings*

1. There is acceptance among male STEM faculty that there is a problem.
2. A journey toward shared awareness and understanding is essential in the early stages.
3. There is a strong belief that successful transformation efforts will improve individual and institutional competitiveness and credibility. These are strong motivators for engagement.
4. Promotion and tenure considerations must be deeply integrated into discussions, plans and strategies surrounding gender initiatives and the generated products.
5. Leadership, especially at the department level, needs to be trained to lead inclusively.
6. Effective STEM departments actively pursue opportunities to create an equitable and inclusive culture.
7. Male faculty consider the level of risk in advocating for and participating in gender initiatives as less than women faculty do.

A multilevel analysis of three STEM faculty focus groups, two composed of male faculty and one of female faculty, revealed considerable information in understanding faculty perspectives regarding the initiation of equity and inclusion activities at Syracuse University. There is clearly motivation to address equity and inclusion efforts at the faculty level. Based on these conversations, male and female faculty

accept that a problem exists. Furthermore it is believed that institutional, departmental and individual competitiveness and credibility will be enhanced when the problem is successfully addressed. By extension and from literature findings we can conclude that there is considerable motivation to address the issues involved. Men faculty will come to the table when gender issues are addressed as institutionally centered concerns that can enhance or impair status, prestige and competitiveness. The male STEM faculty who participated appeared ready to become organizational catalysts. Based on the composition of this group and from their survey responses, The Catalyst conclusion that inspired male organizational catalysts are those with a personal connection to understanding of the barriers being experienced and who have a strong sense of what feels right and fair holds true in the academic setting. There is consensus on campus that supports the established concept in organizational change literature that equity and inclusion initiatives need to start with building awareness about the causes and extent of the problem and what works in best-practice institutions. Moreover, inclusive leadership and equitable and inclusive departmental cultures are critical to success and hence training needs to be developed that empower individuals to make this happen. Finally, there is reason to proceed cautiously. Tenure and promotion considerations for all junior faculty must be carefully considered in all aspects of implementation as well as in the development of any policies and products that come from a gender initiative. Sensitivity also needs to be applied when working with women STEM faculty who have learned to be cautious about taking risks in this arena.

Overall, one of the key elements that makes the academy unique when implementing equity and inclusion initiatives is tenure and its impact on motivation to participate and on constructive risk taking. Further study is needed to fully understand the implications of tenure and the practices that can be initiated with tenure policies and processes that support gender equity and inclusion transformation efforts by individuals, departments and institutions. At Syracuse University, the information garnered from these focus groups will be used to focus and design activities that will support systemic change within the STEM departments and help bring men to the table as equally inspired transformation leaders.

## Appendix 1

### Focus Group Questions

1. In general, what do you feel motivates women to attend to equality and inclusion in the workplace? De-motivates? What motivates and de-motivates men?  
  
Or: In general, what do you feel motivates men to attend to equality and inclusion in the workplace? De-motivates? What motivates and de-motivates women?
2. Of those motivators, which ones will support building commitment to an equitable and inclusive workplace? Which are most likely to be accepted by faculty here SU?
3. What would be compelling reasons for a faculty member on campus to become involved in programs and activities that promote equity and inclusion?
4. What would be compelling reasons for you to become actively involved in equity and inclusion initiatives?
5. What might women/men gain from supporting a culture of equity and inclusion? Men/women?
6. Do you think men who support change towards an equitable and inclusive environment will be judged harshly by other men? In what ways?
7. Have you been judged negatively or pressured for participating in equity and inclusion activities?
8. What promotions of or challenges to gender equity and inclusion do you feel comfortable recognizing and addressing in the classroom? Faculty gatherings?
9. What programs, activities and tools would you find useful to move the culture in your department towards one that is more equitable and inclusive?
10. Describe a seminar, workshop or conference you would want to attend around these topics?
11. What work-life balance issues concern you the most?
12. Stereotypical roles/norms exist for both men and women. For example, men are often taught at an early age to believe that they can have no emotions (“men don’t cry, don’t be a sissy, etc.), they need to be a “man’s man”, etc. Women are the caretakers, relationship guardians, etc. What pressures have you experienced about conforming to social stereotypes when you needed to step out of type? Examples could include excusing yourself from a meeting because of parenting issues, taking parenting leave, having to double check your partner/spouse’s schedule before committing, etc.
13. If you could dream, what would your departmental culture look like?

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