Title of Abstract: FOCUS on Health & Leadership for Women

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OBJECTIVE: FOCUS on Health & Leadership for Women at the UPenn SOM has a twofold mission: supporting the advancement and leadership of women in academic medicine - and promoting women's health research.

INTERVENTIONS: FOCUS is generously funded by the Dean with significant salary support for a leadership team that reports directly to him. FOCUS achieves its goals by: a) providing a comprehensive program that promotes mentoring through professional development sessions, conferences, and networking opportunities; b) increasing awareness of barriers to women’s advancement through the annual collection, analysis, and reporting of gender statistics (Benchmarks) to monitor trends in promotion, retention and leadership; c) assisting senior leadership at both the SOM and University level to address institutional policies/procedures that adversely affect women's careers; and, d) promoting women's health research by awarding seed grants and full-time fellowships to junior faculty and medical students, and by offering a multidisciplinary forum for faculty presentations about women's health research. The majority of programs are open to men and women faculty with specific sessions reserved for women only.

RESULTS: Every year since 1999, we have presented our comprehensive annual gender benchmark data to the Dean and Department Chairs. This visibility is critical to our mission of institutional change. Coincident with FOCUS initiatives, we have documented a statistically significant increase in the proportion of both women (up from 18% to 26%, p=.025) and men faculty (up from 22% to 27%, p=.015) at the associate professor rank when comparing 1999 with 2004.

CONCLUSION: The increase in the proportion of associate professors is coincident with the full implementation of the FOCUS program, and may reflect the impact and success of FOCUS. Now in its twelfth year, FOCUS continues to address the issues confronting PENN women faculty and is extending its efforts to impact institutional change more broadly at the University level and at other academic medical centers.