OUR MISSION
The mission of FOCUS on Health & Leadership for Women (FOCUS) is twofold:
- To support the advancement and leadership of women in academic medicine
- To promote education and research in women’s health and women’s careers

BRIEF HISTORY OF ORGANIZATION
In 1994, FOCUS was launched in the Center for Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics (CCEB) at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. FOCUS was established in response to large gaps in knowledge about the causes, diagnoses, treatments and prevention of diseases in women. One of its primary purposes has been to promote the quantity, quality, and visibility of research pertaining to women’s health. In 1997, with generous support from the School of Medicine, FOCUS instituted leadership mentoring and professional development initiatives in order to address the national data that indicate that women are over-represented in junior ranks and are less likely to attain promotion or tenure relative to their male colleagues in academic medicine. The goal of these initiatives is the recruitment, retention, and promotion of women medical faculty at the University of Pennsylvania. Through professional development conferences and workshops centered on skill building and networking, and through the biennial benchmarking of gender statistics, FOCUS works to foster an increase in the proportion of women faculty in all departments, particularly at the senior levels and in leadership positions. By promoting and retaining more women faculty, the long-range goal is to create an academic culture in which all faculty may fully contribute to the academic mission. FOCUS received the Association of American Medical Colleges annual AAMC Women in Medicine and Science Leadership Development Award in both 2004 (organizational level) and in 2012 (individual level to Dr. Abbuhl).

In sum, FOCUS on Health & Leadership for Women supports the twofold initiative of advancing the careers of women in academic medicine and promoting education and research in women’s health and leadership in order to foster gender equity in medical education, biomedical research, clinical care, and in the leadership and administration of the academic health center. The faculty leadership of the FOCUS program is comprised of a multidisciplinary group of women with specific expertise and interest in advancing the health, leadership, and professional development of women:

Stephanie Abbuhl, MD, Executive Director
Professor and Vice Chair of Faculty Affairs, Wellness & Professionalism, Department of Emergency Medicine

Lucy W. Tuton, PhD, Director of Professional Development
Adjunct Professor, Department of Medicine
Adjunct Professor, Prevention & Population Health
Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology
Associate Director, Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholars Program (University of Pennsylvania)
Executive Director, Bridging the Gaps

Hillary R. Bogner, MD MSCE, Director of Research Programs
Associate Professor and Associate Chair for Research
Department of Family Medicine & Community Health
Senior Scholar, Center for Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics

Bridget Keogh, MPH, Managing Director of Research Programs

Susan Primavera, Director of Operations
Overview of Current FOCUS Initiatives

Women Faculty Career Development and Leadership Initiatives

Benchmarks Initiative
Since 1999, FOCUS has continuously compiled a comprehensive report, Benchmark Data: Gender Statistics of Faculty, University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. This report documents the gender distributions of medical faculty by rank, track, and department, and the representation of women faculty serving in leadership positions and on key committees. In addition, Penn gender data are compared with the national medical school benchmarks tabulated by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC). This extensive data compilation, currently a biennial process, helps monitor Penn’s efforts to support the retention and promotion of women faculty and guides the FOCUS programmatic agenda. The current data are presented periodically to Department Chairs and the Dean and serve as a critical measure of the Dean’s Strategic Plan. The formalized reports are all posted on the FOCUS website.

Annual Fall Leadership Mentoring Conference
This conference, entitled Successful Strategies for Women in Academic Medicine, has been an annual event since 1997 and is the sole opportunity for all women at Penn to convene in a daylong meeting during which nationally recognized speakers and senior Penn faculty present plenary sessions, workshops and skill building sessions. Plenary speakers have included women Deans and Chairs, renowned experts in academic medicine and gender issues, career development experts, and management consultants. Workshops have included topics such as Public Speaking & Presentation, Negotiation, Conflict Management, Career Strategies, Time Management, Balancing Work & Family, and Writing for Publication. All Penn women in academic medicine, in all ranks and tracks, are invited to attend — MDs, PhDs, faculty, instructors, lecturers, fellows, and residents. The Dean or another senior leader customarily delivers a welcome address and sets the stage for the importance of mentoring, networking and advancing women’s careers at Penn.

Faculty Recognition Awards: Advancement of Women in Medicine & Outstanding Mentoring
In 2004, FOCUS introduced the FOCUS Award for the Advancement of Women in Medicine. This award recognizes a faculty member (male or female) whose outstanding efforts and achievements have promoted the career success, leadership, and overall quality of life for Penn women in academic medicine. All Penn medical faculty, excluding those who comprise the leadership of FOCUS, on any of the “fulltime” tracks (Tenure, Clinician-Educator, Research, and Academic-Clinician) are eligible for nomination. In addition to the institutional recognition this honor brings, the recipient receives a plaque during the annual Fall Conference for Penn women in academic medicine. The awardee’s name is also added to a plaque that permanently hangs with other School of Medicine awards.

FOCUS also created the annual FOCUS Mentoring Award for Excellence in 1999 to recognize the critical importance of mentoring in academic medicine. In 2004, at the request of the Dean, this mentoring award became a School of Medicine Award of Excellence, the Arthur K. Asbury Outstanding Faculty Mentoring Award. FOCUS is honored by the evolution of this award to a permanent place among other prestigious School of Medicine faculty awards.

Lunchtime Seminar Series
FOCUS sponsors lunchtime seminars on women’s health research, professional development for academic physicians, and “hot topics” in healthcare. Presenters include faculty from the School of Medicine as well as from across the University — anthropologists, bioethicists, economists, lawyers, medical historians, sociologists, psychologists, as well as physicians and researchers — all of whom offer exposure and fresh perspective to a broad range of medical and professional development topics. This interactive one-hour lunchtime format provides opportunities for faculty to convene across departments and centers and thereby promotes networking within the School of Medicine, the Hospital, and across the University. The Seminar Series is well-attended by both men and women faculty from a broad range of specialties. A portion of the series is devoted to workshops on career development and mentoring, particularly targeting female and/or junior medical faculty.
Longitudinal Cohorts
FOCUS offers longitudinal cohort workshops that focus on professional development targeting the needs of women faculty in academic medicine at various career stages. The cohort series provide an in-depth personal approach to strategic planning for career “next steps” and proactive skill building through structured mentoring with senior facilitators and peers. Sessions are designed to: 1) give faculty the opportunity to be proactive and forward-thinking about their career/life; 2) provide a structure to explore new career possibilities and experiment with how to implement a career/life plan that is aligned with individual interests and values while also realistic; 3) create a reinvigorating vision of the future; and 4) finally, offer each participant a network of other women faculty, who can not only serve as resources and support going forward, but also can help mitigate any sense of isolation. An important additional feature of these sessions are that they are intentionally administered by Penn Med faculty for Penn Med faculty, which makes the content and process particularly relevant to the participants. Recent examples include:
- Using the Past to Inform the Future: Taking a Proactive Approach to the Opportunities of Mid-Career - 8-faculty cohort series curriculum and facilitation by Lucy W. Tuton, PhD and Stephanie Abbuhl, MD - 4 sessions
- Using the Past to Inform the Future –Taking a Proactive Approach to Your Later Stage of Career - 12-faculty cohort series curriculum and facilitation by Lucy W. Tuton, PhD and Stephanie Abbuhl, MD – 3 sessions
- FOCUS also offers longitudinal cohorts designed around specific topics related to developing a skill set within the context of individual career needs and personal values. Recent example include: Time Management and Delegation; a 2-Session Workshop

Section for Women Residents & Fellows
The FOCUS Section for Women Residents & Fellows was developed in 2007 in response to multiple requests for similar “women in medicine” programming tailored for women trainees. This initiative offers residents and fellows annual networking opportunities in sessions that provide critical skills and resources for career advancement and work/life balance in academic medicine. Topics include training opportunities at Penn Medicine, negotiation, career paths after training, finding and generating effective mentoring, funding mechanisms and grant applications. Some of these sessions may also be open to men trainees in our effort to provide programs that benefit everyone and improve mentoring for all residents and fellows. (Dedicated support from the Anastasia Lyalenko Memorial Fund & the Grisso Endowment for the Michelle Battistini FOCUS Fund)

Journal Club
The FOCUS Journal Club is an initiative that began in the Fall of 2018. The goal of the FOCUS Journal Club is to bring colleagues together to read and discuss literature pertaining to various gender topics. Topics that have been discussed to-date include: the evaluation of faculty development programs; gender bias in academic medicine; and leadership. Five meetings are held throughout the academic year.

Collaborative Initiatives with Medical School & University Committees and Regional & National Women in Medicine Programs
FOCUS regularly collaborates with the School of Medicine’s Office of Inclusion and Diversity and Office of Faculty Affairs and Professional Development to provide jointly sponsored programs and develop strategic approaches to faculty development in general. Over the years, FOCUS has worked closely on University level projects with the Provost’s office and the Penn Forum for Women Faculty. Finally, FOCUS networks regularly with the AAMC’s Group on Women in Medicine and Science (GWIMS), the Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine (ELAM) Program, the Academy for Women in Academic Emergency Medicine (AWAEM), and other national women’s organizations to provide consultation to other programs and to share in best practices.

Website: www.focusprogram.org -or- www.med.upenn.edu/focus
The FOCUS web site contains resource information of national interest to those working in the area of women’s career and leadership development and women’s health. In addition, the site includes details about FOCUS activities and projects, Penn and external resources for women, a bibliography of references that impact women in academic medicine, and links to AAMC activities and to other organizations that center on issues relevant to women medical faculty.

**Women’s Health Research Related Initiatives**

**Junior Faculty Investigator Award: Seed Grants for Research in Women’s Health**

FOCUS secures extramural funding to provide junior faculty investigators, both men and women, with year-long seed grants of currently $20,000 to conduct clinical, basic science, or public health research in women’s health. The overall objective of this grants program is to enable researchers to: a) conduct pilot research projects that can serve as the basis for building a career in academic medicine, or b) conduct gender-relevant analysis of existing research projects. The seed grants support direct costs including data acquisition, laboratory tests, technical assistance, salary, survey costs, and computer time. To date, FOCUS has supported 47 junior faculty grants. *(Currently funded by the Edna G. Kynett Memorial Foundation)*

**Medical Student Fellowship in Women’s Health**

The FOCUS Medical Student Fellowship in Women’s Health is also funded extramurally. This popular program offers students funded, mentored opportunities to work fulltime for six months conducting clinical or basic science research, or working in a community-based program focused on issues of women’s health. Through these fellowships, medical students learn hands-on research skills; work on publications generated from the research; gain knowledge in a specific area of women’s health; experience the multitude of factors that impact women’s healthcare; and, develop an appreciation of and expertise in a specific area of women’s health. FOCUS has supported 88 medical student fellows to date. The extramural funding allows FOCUS to provide all students with a stipend of $7500 for the 6 month fellowship. *(Currently funded by the Bertha Dagan Berman Award, the Edna G. Kynett Memorial Foundation, and Patricia Kind)*

**Other Related Initiatives Involving FOCUS Leadership**

**The Penn Faculty Pathways Program:** This “career leadership program” was launched in October 2013 to tailor components of the NIH-TAC trial (see below) for STEmM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math and Medicine) junior faculty at the University of Pennsylvania. The initiative was developed at the request of the Vice Provost and is being supported by the Provost’s Excellence Through Diversity Fund (ETDF) and also by the Deans of the six STEmM Schools (PSOM, SEAS, SAS, Vet, Nursing, Dental). The Pathways Program is designed to enhance the personal and professional development of faculty members (men and women) in the first phase of their careers at Penn. The goal is to improve academic productivity as well as job satisfaction in junior faculty by providing leadership training and skill building workshops to guide their career planning, personal development and scholarly success at Penn. The specific aims are to serve as the foundation for a University-wide effort to: (1) maximize the potential of Penn’s world-class faculty by optimizing their creativity, productivity, engagement and satisfaction at work and in other parts of their life; (2) build community and faculty collaboration across disciplines; and, (3) provide specific skill-building sessions to improve strategies for academic success at Penn. Currently working with a sixth faculty cohort (18 faculty in each), the program consists of 8 sessions in year one and 4 sessions in year two. Three sessions involve Wharton faculty member Stew Friedman’s Total Leadership Program and the other 9 sessions address key faculty career development topics such as strategies for promotion, time management and delegation, negotiation, effective communication, team management, career mapping, and leadership. *(Pathways Team faculty/staff: Stephanie Abbuhl, MD [Perelman School of Medicine-PSOM, Executive Director of FOCUS] and Steve Friedman, PhD [Wharton] are the joint Directors; Ivan J. Dmochowski, PhD [School of Arts and Sciences], Lucy W. Tuton PhD [PSOM, FOCUS] and Susan Primavera [PSOM, FOCUS]*)

**FOCUS Twitter Initiative @FOCUS_UPenn**
The FOCUS Twitter initiative began in 2018 to engage and connect individuals, programs, and organizations around issues affecting women in academic medicine. The FOCUS Program uses Twitter as a platform for disseminating evidence-based practices, new research, and important news related to the core tenets of FOCUS: 1) improving the recruitment, retention, advancement and leadership of women faculty and 2) promoting education and research in women’s health and leadership. FOCUS engages in various local and national conversations on Twitter and has also implemented #WomenOffPENN, a discussion with the goal of highlighting PENN women faculty who have made a substantial impact through their accomplishments in research, education, clinical care, community outreach, or quality improvement. In addition, #WomenOffPENN is a venue to share the experience, wisdom and insight that women faculty have about academic medicine and its many opportunities, rewards and challenges. FOCUS also utilizes Twitter to build community and encourage dialogue around upcoming events such as the FOCUS Annual Fall Conference, Seminar Series, longitudinal mentoring programs, and other resources, as well as discussing current controversies in the national discussion about women’s advancement and leadership. The FOCUS Twitter Initiative is a collaboration with our Penn colleagues including Monika Sanghavi, MD as well as Nosheen Reza, MD and Maria Basil, MD, PhD, who lead the FOCUS Section for Women Residents & Fellows.

Research, Awards & Publications
The NIH-TAC (Transforming Academic Culture) Trial: The work of the FOCUS leadership led to a unique, landmark intervention trial funded in 2009 by a 4-year NIH-RO1 grant. With enthusiastic support from the Dean of the School of Medicine and the President of the University of Pennsylvania, FOCUS assembled a multidisciplinary team of researchers to conduct this cluster-randomized study. The hypothesis was that a multi-level, coordinated intervention would improve academic productivity, job satisfaction, and the overall quality of life for junior women faculty in intervention departments compared with their counterparts in control departments. The intervention included three components: 1) junior women faculty participation in the nationally-recognized Total Leadership Program and with an eight-session Manuscript Writing course; 2) structured, facilitated task forces in each intervention department to conduct analyses of work practices, recruitment, mentorship, and cultural attitudes and then develop and implement interventions for change; and 3) periodic individual meetings with the senior leaders of intervention departments. The goal was to create an environment where women could succeed fully in their careers, thus maximizing their contributions to academic medicine and improving the workplace for all faculty, both men and women. Four peer-reviewed papers have been published thus far: a reliable and valid culture measure was developed that can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions; an innovative three-tiered intervention can be implemented in a cluster-randomized trial across an entire school of medicine with substantial improvements in both intervention and control groups for publications, grants, culture scores and work-self efficacy; certain subgroups of the intervention group had significant improvements in publications and grants; the intervention was associated with a 4 hour decrease in work-week hours while academic productivity increased; and, department culture plays a crucial role in women’s careers – women in more supportive cultures experience less work-family conflict, even at equivalent levels of demanding work hours. (Joint PIs: Stephanie Abbuhl, MD [Executive Director, FOCUS] & Jeane Ann Grisso, MD MSc [Founder, FOCUS])

Awards
FOCUS Program: The AAMC Women in Medicine Leadership Development Award (for an organization), Boston, MA, 2004.


First Prize, poster competition, AAMC Annual Meeting: Group on Women in Medicine and Science (GWIMS), Denver, CO, 2011.

Awards (continued)
Abuhl, Stephanie: The AAMC Women in Medicine and Science Leadership Development Award (for an individual), San Francisco, CA, 2012.

Abuhl, Stephanie: Trustees’ Council of Penn Women-Provost Award, University of Pennsylvania (for significant contributions to advancing the role of women in higher education and research at UPenn), 2013.

Abuhl, Stephanie: Arthur K. Asbury Outstanding Faculty Mentor Award (one of the Penn Medicine Awards of Excellence), 2015.

**Publications**


**Publications (continued)**


**Abstracts and Poster Presentations**


Abbuhl SB, Scott P, Cappola A, Tuton LW: FOCUS initiatives and seven years of faculty gender data at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. *Poster presentation at the AAMC Annual Meeting in Seattle, WA* October 2006.


**Abstracts and Poster Presentations (continued)**


Abstracts and Poster Presentations (continued)
Westring AF, Speck RM, Sammel MD, Conant EF, Scott P, Tuton LW, Grisso JA, Abbuhl SB: How a 3-tiered intervention impacted academic productivity of women medical faculty: results from the NIH-TAC (Transforming Academic Culture) Trial. Poster presentation at the AAMC Annual Meeting in Chicago, IL November 2014.


Abbuhl SB, Friedman S, Margulies SS, Primavera S, Scott P, Tuton LW: Penn faculty pathways program. Session presentation at the AAMC Learn Serve Lead Annual Meeting (Faculty-Focused Knowledge Fair) in Baltimore, MD November 2015.


Alternative Media

Cited in Publications and News


Westring AF, Speck RM, Sammel MD, Conant EF, Scott P, Tuton LW, Grisso JA, Abbuhl SB: How a 3-tiered intervention impacted academic productivity of women medical faculty: results from the NIH-TAC (Transforming Academic Culture) Trial. Invited to be listed in the AAMC MedEdPORTAL’s iCollaborative web resource, November 2014. (Poster presented at the 2014 AAMC Annual Meeting in Chicago, IL)


Featured in Forbes “America’s Best Employers for Women 2018,” July 2018