Background Information and Frequently Asked Questions about the UWM Male Allies/Male Advocates Initiative

1. What is the UWM Male Allies/Male Advocates Initiative?

This program was developed by faculty at the North Dakota State University as part of their NSF ADVANCE grants to engage faculty across campus to help men partner with women to create a gender-equitable work environment. Their grant resulted in the creation of two programs that we have contracted with them to adapt for UWM. The first is “Male Ally” workshops that focus on implicit bias training for men and “Male Advocates” training that focuses on training a small group of men (8-10) to develop gender equity plans. The gender equity plans are developed under the guidance and direction of a “Male Allies Women’s Advisory Board”. The “Male Ally” training and “Male Advocates” workshops will be facilitated by Dr. Roger Green, an Engineering faculty member at NDSU, and Dr. Rob Gordon, a Psychology faculty member, formerly at NDSU who is now at Auburn University. In adapting this for UWM, we have also decided to hold women’s listening sessions. The NDSY NSF Advance grant adhered to the government’s use of binary male and female language, thus, those terms are used here, but nonbinary employees are free to attend whichever session they want.

2. How did the UWM Male Allies/Male Advocates Initiative come about?

This initiative was the result of a joint partnership among the Ombuds Council, the Provost’s, and Chancellor’s offices to address gender equity and concerns about climate, particularly for STEM women faculty. It was decided to extend the initiative to faculty and employees across campus.

3. How are “Male Allies” and “Male Advocates” defined?

NDSU program defines these as:

- “Male allies” are trained men who identify and behave as allies of women employees
- “Male advocates” are men with a record of supporting women faculty and who commit significant time and effort to the “Advocates and Allies” program

4. How is the initiative structured?

The NDSU faculty created a template for helping universities to become more gender equitable. The template includes two parts:

1) Providing training for male allies on implicit bias. This two hour workshop was first conducted in Fall, 2018, when the NDSU faculty
provided 3 workshops, attended by over 120 men, including all male deans, the Provost and the Chancellor. This workshop will be repeated on April 25th. Men are welcome to sign up here: https://t.e2ma.net/click/2g1z5/i17mxm/uy194f

2) More extensive training for a select group of men who will become advocates. Advocates will develop gender equity plans under the guidance of the “Male Allies Women’s Advisory Board” (MAWAB). They will be held accountable to the WAB for implementation of those plans.

5. What is the “Male Allies Women’s Advisory Board”?

The Male Allies Women’s Advisory Board is a group of senior women in STEM departments (Engineering and Letters and Science) who were asked to participate in this as a pilot project for this spring semester.

6. Who are members of the “Male Allies Women’s Advisory Board”?


7. Is the “Male Allies Women’s Advisory Board” part of the governance process?

No. This was a group invited to participate in this pilot project and also to provide some initial input into planning for a larger ADVANCE grant from the National Science Foundation for institutional transformation among STEM faculty and selected other departments.

8. What is an NSF ADVANCE grant?

The goal of the NSF ADVANCE grant is to increase the representation and advancement of women in academic science and engineering careers. The grant is used to address aspects of the academic and institutional structure that may differentially affect women faculty and academic administrators.

You can learn more about this program at: https://www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/advance/

9. What are the women’s listening sessions?

Dr. Christi McGeorge (a member of the NDSU team) will facilitate listening sessions for women employees on campus. In addition to providing an opportunity for women to talk about the climate for women on campus, the
aggregated information from the women’s listening sessions will serve two purposes:

They will inform the gender equity plans developed by the male advocates. The goal is for the male advocates to know more about the lived experiences of women on the UWM campus.

They will help form the basis of a climate survey that will be sent to all women on campus. The climate survey will be submitted to IRB for review and approval.

The women’s listening sessions will be held April 25 and 26; women may sign up here: https://t.e2ma.net/click/2g1z5/i17mxm/e6094f

10. Why are the listening sessions just for women?

Because the climate for women on campus is different from that of men, and the microclimate across departments differ. Women in some departments feel they are treated fairly and with respect, while women in other departments face a chilly or even hostile climate. We have not had a systematic opportunity to assess the climate for women since 2000-2001; this will provide information on how—or if—climate has changed since then.