

## NDSU computer science department receives Advance FORWARD Award

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The [Department of Computer Science](#) received the 2013 Advance FORWARD Department Award at the annual FORWARD kickoff event held Sept. 4. The award is presented annually by the Commission on the Status of Women Faculty to recognize and reward significant department efforts to improve campus climate and gender equity within the faculty ranks.

A review panel evaluated the award nominations/applications, guided by a weighted rubric reflecting each of FORWARD's five target areas: climate, recruitment, retention, promotion and leadership.

The review panel noted computer science's exceptional commitment and progress to the recruitment and retention of women within their department. According to the application, systematic efforts toward changing the atmosphere and profile of the department in an attempt to improve climate and diversity began in 2004. Six of 12 hires since 2004 have been women. The resulting 37.5 percent women faculty in computer science is more than double the 17.6 percent national average and also represents a dramatic increase over the 7.1 percent proportion in the NDSU computer science department a decade ago.

The department demonstrates commitment to improving climate and supporting the promotion and leadership advancement of its women faculty, who are accorded visibility and recognition as active department contributors. Through concern for maintaining optimal engagement of faculty and staff, several family friendly practices involving flexible work arrangements and issues of childcare have evolved. While the department currently does not have women faculty at the full professor level, intentional efforts in recruitment and retention position the department for substantial future progress in this area.

Related to but beyond current FORWARD goals, the department is proactively committed to increasing the number of women earning bachelor's degrees in the field, which is one of five listed goals of the department in its 2011-12 annual report. Structured opportunities to engage and connect with female students and professionals through professional organizations and corporate activities, such as collaborations with Microsoft, are being pursued. Overall, the department exhibits consistent and persistent efforts across departmental actions to tap the talents of qualified women faculty and students.

Another \$5,000 Advance FORWARD Department Award will be given in 2014. In preparation for next year's award, departments are encouraged to think about their strategies, policies and practices and outcomes that show progress toward the five core FORWARD goals:

- Improve climate: provide strategies to improve department climate and narrow the gap between men's and women's perceptions of campus climate.
- Enhance recruitment: employing recruiting strategies to recruit women, women of color and women with disabilities.
- Increase retention: strategies to retain women in the department through the probationary period and the promotion/tenure process.
- Promote and advance women: strategies to support women associate professors as they move to full professor, and hire advanced women.
- Open leadership opportunities: strategies to promote women faculty in academic leadership positions.

More photos of the Advance FORWARD kickoff event are available at the group's Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/pages/NDSU-Advance-FORWARD/123188811045481>.