SUMMARY
Despite concern over gender imbalance in computing, very few undergraduate programs have succeeded in their efforts to improve women’s representation. This panel will describe the process followed and value added by trained consultants providing free customized services to “client” departments seeking to recruit and retain more women students. These professional services are provided at no charge by the National Center for Women & IT (NCWIT) Extension Services for Undergraduate Programs (ES-UP), with support from the National Science Foundation.

Increasing participation of women in undergraduate programs requires a multi-pronged, systemic approach that includes:
- Improved recruitment
- Inclusive pedagogy
- Meaningful curriculum
- Support for students from faculty and other students
- High-level institutional support and appropriate policies
- Ongoing assessment of initiatives and progress

Expert assistance helps academic departments with the complex undertaking of addressing the entire system that affects undergraduate students’ experience as computing majors. The research-based ES-UP process for providing this confidential assistance is illustrated in Figure 1. [Sources employed for developing the ES-UP model include 4, 5, and 6.]

Figure 1. Working toward Systemic Change for Diversity
At this time, ES-UP serves 36 departments and is operating at full capacity. Early clients have reported substantial success [1, 2, 3], and several other clients have used Baseline Reports to obtain financial support for implementing initiatives. Additional funding is being sought to meet further demand from potential ES-UP clients.

Categories and Subject Descriptors
K.3.2. Computers and Education. Computer and Information Science Education.

General Terms
Human Factors

Keywords
Gender, Women, Diversity, Systemic Change.

1. J. McGrath Cohoon
As co-PI for this project, Dr. Cohoon will briefly describe its motivation and process design. She will also introduce the other panelists.

2. Rebecca Dohrman
Campus visits are the heart of the information-gathering process, a crucial early step in the ES-UP service. As a new Extension Services Consultant, Ms. Dohrman will describe preparations for this important task, so that audience members might perform investigations for their own departments. She will use the results from a recent visit with her client department to illustrate both the process and the valuable results it produces.

3. Jennifer Goodall
Dr. Goodall is one of only two Extension Services Consultants who are also representatives of client departments. Speaking as her school’s Diversity Coordinator, she will describe both her experiences as a client pulling together data from official university records to track gender balance in enrollment and retention, and faculty reaction to their Baseline Report.

4. Leisa D. Thompson
As Director of Research and Consultation for ES-UP, Dr. Thompson has a high-level view across all the consultants and clients. She will describe the similarities and differences in client departments related to enrollment trends, retention rates, and institutional support for diversity efforts.

5. Elizabeth Litzler
As external project evaluator, Ms. Litzler has valuable observations about the time it typically takes for undertaking systemic change and what departments might do when they do not have the benefit of an Extension Services Consultant, including the process of creating buy-in for systemic change efforts.
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REFERENCES


