



**WISELI's Celebrating Women in Science and
Engineering Grant Program:
Evaluation Report, 2010-2015**

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Learning • Evaluation • Adaptation • Dissemination

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Introduction

The Celebrating Women in Science and Engineering Grant Program offers funding that enables departments in engineering and the physical and biological sciences to bring prominent women speakers to the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus. The grant program also offers funding for implementation of workshops, programming, or presentations that support women in STEM careers. Speakers that address women's issues in STEM fields are also invited with this grant funding. The program aims to expose students and faculty to accomplished women scientists and engineers and to advance women in science and engineering on the UW campus. While on campus, invited speakers are able to contribute to these aims in a variety of venues, including research talks, small-group discussions, and one-on-one meetings. According to the WISELI website:

“This program provides funds to departments, centers, or student groups wishing to enhance their own seminar schedules or to create new workshops, symposia, lecture series, or similar events in line with the goals of WISELI: to promote the participation and advancement of women in science and engineering. The maximum award is \$3,000, and the maximum time frame for the award is one academic year. WISELI strongly encourages applicants to seek matching/additional funds from relevant departments, the University Lectures committee, or other campus offices.”¹

WISELI, the grant's administrative home, expects that invited speakers will promote the advancement of women in science and engineering by contributing to the scientific discourse in various departments, increasing the visibility of women in science and engineering, and serving as role models and potential mentors for women students. The program also encourages departments to routinely include women among its seminar/colloquium speakers.

The following process has been followed during the grant's implementation:

“WISELI staff members solicit applications for the grant program through the WISELI website, listserv, and e-mail announcements to deans and department chairs in the natural and physical sciences, and through word-of-mouth...Applications are vetted by a team of reviewers and evaluated on the basis of their congruence with WISELI's goals for this program. Recipients are required to submit evaluations of the effectiveness of their speaker in advancing WISELI's goals (see Appendix A for post-event evaluation form).”²

¹ <http://wiseli.engr.wisc.edu/celebrating.php>

² Kerr, B., Winchell, J., & Pribbenow, C. (2010). WISELI's Celebrating Women in Science & Engineering Grant Program: Evaluation Report, 2002-2009.

WISELI Celebrating Women in Science and Engineering Grant Program 2010-2015

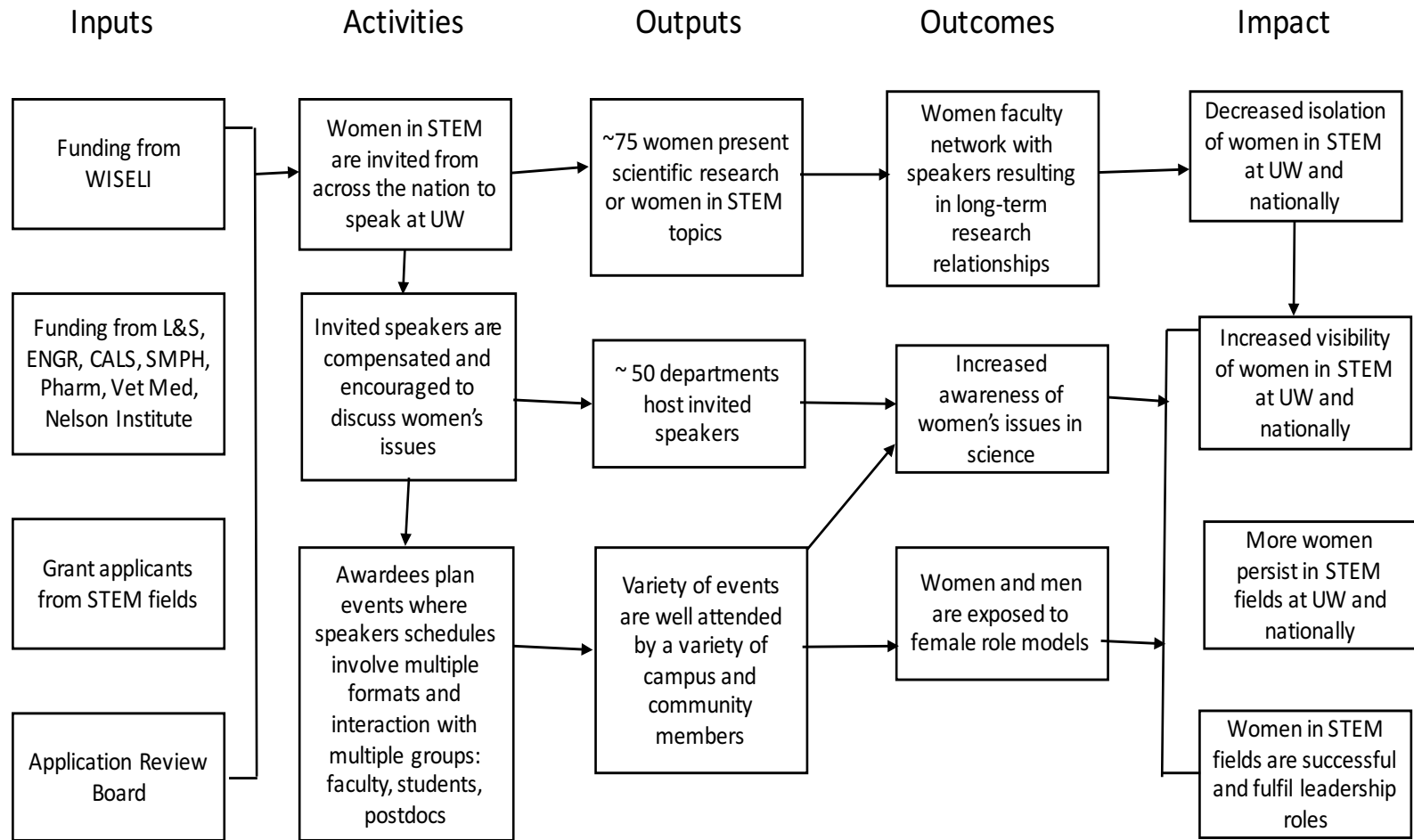


Figure 1. Logic Model of 2010-2015 Grant Program

History of Grant Program and Evaluation

The Celebrating Women in Science and Engineering Grant Program was evaluated previously and covered the 45 grants awarded between 2002 and 2009. For this review, evaluations completed post-event by each of the awardees were analyzed and categorized thematically (see Appendix A for evaluation form). Results from this review indicate that the program was indeed meeting its intended audience and was having positive effects on its grantees and program participants.³ In addition to the analysis of post-event evaluations, the October 2010 full report⁴ included data from interviews with twelve people representing six awards. The current review of 2010 to 2015 data found results to be similar and consistent with findings from 2002 to 2009.

These previous evaluation findings suggest that the audience found the speakers to be:

- Interesting
- Encouraging
- Inspirational
- Informative

The findings also suggest that the speakers support women through the following ways:

- Providing role models
- Addressing career/family concerns
- Speaking to climate challenges
- Suggesting alternative career paths
- Providing research support
- Offering leadership and networking opportunities
- Mentoring

The report concluded that the first seven years of the program have had positive outcomes and successfully support women in science and engineering by:

- Increasing the visibility of women in a variety of science and engineering disciplines;
- Inviting additional speakers to ongoing departmental symposia;
- Providing role models in departments and fields in which the number of females are low;
- Offering career options and potential faculty and post doc positions for current graduate students; and
- Creating leadership opportunities for graduate students who plan and attend the events.

³ Winchell, J., & Kerr, B. (Spring, 2010). Celebrating Women in Science and Engineering Grant Program, 2002-2009: Interim Evaluation Report.

⁴ Kerr, B., Winchell, J., & Pribbenow, C. (October, 2010). WISELI's Celebrating Women in Science & Engineering Grant Program: Evaluation Report, 2002-2009.

Current Review: Evaluation Findings from 2010-2015

The current evaluation sought to uncover additional benefits and evidence of long-term success of the grant. In particular, the following questions guided this evaluation:

- What was the applicant's motivation for participating in the grant program; why was it important to them?
- Did the event result in any long-term changes or impacts at an individual or department level?
- How can the program be improved to enhance the short or long-term impact it has on individuals or departments?

Research methods

Timeline: Beginning February 16, 2016 the evaluator, Christine Fabian, was given access to and began analysis of grant documents. Interviews were conducted between March 3 and March 14. Data analysis and reporting continued through mid-April.

Document review: Eve Fine made grant documents and sources of data from 2010 through 2015 available to the evaluator. The evaluator had access to: grant applications, award letters, denial letters, post-event evaluations, and spreadsheets of amounts of awards and contributions. Information from the WISELI website; table of award recipients and previous evaluation reports, were also used for the content of this report.

Interviews: Interview invitations were e-mailed to 38 grant awardees from the previous 2 to 5 years. These invitations led to responses from ten awardees willing to schedule a 15 to 20-minute telephone interview. Ten awardees participated in the interviews between March 3 and March 14. The interview protocol is located in Appendix B. During the fifteen-minute phone interview, detailed notes were taken by hand. Immediately after the interview these detailed notes were elaborated in a typed document. Then, this document was analyzed for responses and themes which are reported in the following sections.

Grant awardees

Overall, 48 grants were awarded between 2010 and 2015. A variety of schools or colleges and departments benefitted from WISELI awards. The College of Engineering received the most award money, followed by College of Letters and Science, and College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. The Department of Veterinary Medicine and School of Pharmacy contributed funds to the program, however there were no applicants and therefore no awardees representing those programs.

School or College Donations and Awards 2010-2015			
Department	Donation	Award	Difference
ENGR	\$12,000	\$21,851	\$9,851
L&S	\$10,000	\$17,850	\$7,850
CALS	\$12,500	\$12,019	-\$481
SMPH	\$12,000	\$4,562	-\$6,438
Nelson Institute	\$2,500	\$1,341	-\$1,159
Vet Med	\$5,000		-\$5,000
Pharmacy	\$2,500		-\$2,500
Cross-College		\$7,200	\$6,200
Total	\$56,500	\$64,823	\$8,323

Table 1. School or College Donations and Awards 2010-2015

Many applicants request the full award of \$3,000; however, very few are granted the full award. Partial awards are granted with encouragement to seek additional or matching funds from the department. Most awardees used the full amount of money awarded. The most common reason for not using the full amount is a cancelled event due to an unavailable speaker.

Year	# of Applications	# denials # did not use	\$ Requested	\$ Awarded	\$ Used
2010-2011	13	5 denials	\$32,478	\$11,500	\$11,500
2011-2012	10	1 denial 2 did not use	\$17,684	\$10,495	\$7,295
2012-2013	9	0	\$15,650	\$11,792	\$11,792
2013-2014	10	2 did not use 1 partial	\$14,792	\$10,720	\$8,920
2014-2015	11	2 denial 1 did not use	\$24,591	\$12,080	\$11,580
2015-2016	10	3 denial 1 did not use 1 partial	\$25,915	\$10,986	\$9,386
Total	63		\$131,110	\$67,573	\$60,473

Table 2. Number of Applications, Amounts Requested and Awarded by Year

Table 3 displays all awards from 2010 through 2015 organized by school or college. The amount of the single award or multiple awards is listed alongside the department and type of applicant/awardee. The department of Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences has received four awards; other than that, it is uncommon for a department to receive

multiple awards. Professors, directors of diversity initiatives, graduate students, and graduate student groups are typical applicants. Motivations for applying for WISELI funding is discussed in the interview section of this report.

School or College	Grant \$ Awarded	Department	Applicant/Awardee
College of Engineering	\$820	Environmental Chemistry & Toxicology, Civil and Environmental Engineering	Graduate Student
	\$2000	Biomedical Engineering	Assistant Professor
	\$500 \$1000 \$1135	COE Diversity Affairs	Assistant Director (3 awards)
	\$1000	Graduate Engineering Research Scholars	Graduate Student
	\$1000	Industrial and Systems Engineering; Human Factors and Ergonomic Society Student Chapter	Graduate Student
	\$1500 \$1310	Civil and Environmental Engineering	Graduate Student Group (2 awards)
	\$500	Materials Science and Engineering	Professor
	\$1000	COE Career Services/Student Development	Assistant Dean
	\$1132	Human Factors and Ergonomics Society (Industrial Engineering)	Graduate Student
	\$1000	Industrial Engineering	Professor
	\$1374 \$1080	Civil and Environmental Engineering/Office of Sustainability/ Geological Engineering	Outreach Specialist and Researcher (2 awards)
	\$2000	Biomedical Engineering	Assistant Professor
	\$2000	Environmental Chemistry & Technology	Graduate Student
	\$21851		

School or College	Grant \$ Awarded	Department	Applicant/Awardee
Letters and Science	\$600	Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences	Graduate Student
	\$2000	Chemistry	Computational Chemistry Leader
	\$1500	Limnology	Graduate Student Group
	\$1500	Botany	Assistant Professor
	\$500	Chemistry	Assistant Professor
	\$2000	Gender and Women's Studies	Director
	\$1200	Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences	Graduate Student (2 awards)
	\$2500	Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences	Graduate Student
	\$250	Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences	Graduate Student
	\$2250	Botany	Associate Professor
	\$500	Geography	Graduate Student
	\$750	Physics	Professor
	\$1300	Physics	Assistant Professor
	\$1000	Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences	Assistant Professor
	\$17850		
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences	\$2066	Ecology	Graduate Committee
	\$1080	Entomology	Assistant Scientist
	\$2500	Food Science	Graduate Program Coordinator
	\$600	Bacteriology and Plant Pathology	Professor
	\$858	Biological Systems Engineering	Associate Professor
	\$1165	Plant Pathology	Professor
	\$500	Dairy Science	Professor/Department Chair
	\$1500	Entomology	Associate Professor
	\$1750	Plant Science Graduate Student Council	Graduate Student
	\$12019		
School of Medicine and Public Health	\$2000	Dermatology	Clinical Associate Professor
	\$562	Neuroscience	Professor/Interim Chair
	\$2000	Human Oncology	Assistant Professor

School or College	Grant \$ Awarded	Department	Applicant/Awardee
	\$4562		
Cross-College and Other Schools	\$2000	Black Graduate and Professional Students Association	Graduate Student
	\$3000	Graduate Women in Science	Graduate Student
	\$1341	Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies	Professor
	\$1200	Holtz Center for Science and Technology Studies	Professor
	\$1000	School of Nursing	Associate Professor
	\$8541		

Table 3. Distribution of grants awarded by school or college 2010-2015.

Typical Event

Award recipients typically used the WISELI grant to bring prominent women scientists to the UW-Madison campus. Most speakers gave research presentations, participated in question and answer sessions, and attended small-group luncheons or dinners. Brown bag lunch presentations with graduate students was a common activity. Some also met with student organizations, held one-on-one meetings with graduate students, faculty members, or post-doctoral students, attended small-group discussions, and lectured to a class. The presenters followed busy schedules that allowed them to interact with different groups of faculty, graduate students, and others over the course of two or more days. Some visits were organized by students; most were organized by faculty.

Invited speakers focused presentations around their scientific work but incorporated smaller group meetings to discuss topics relevant to the WISELI grant funding requirements. This allowed attendees to see multiple sides of the scientists and their careers. Invited speakers represented a variety of prestigious academic institutions and government agencies. Very few speakers represented industry or other organizations outside of academia.

Celebrating Women in STEM 2010-2015

Invited Speakers Represent Academic Institutions From 21 States

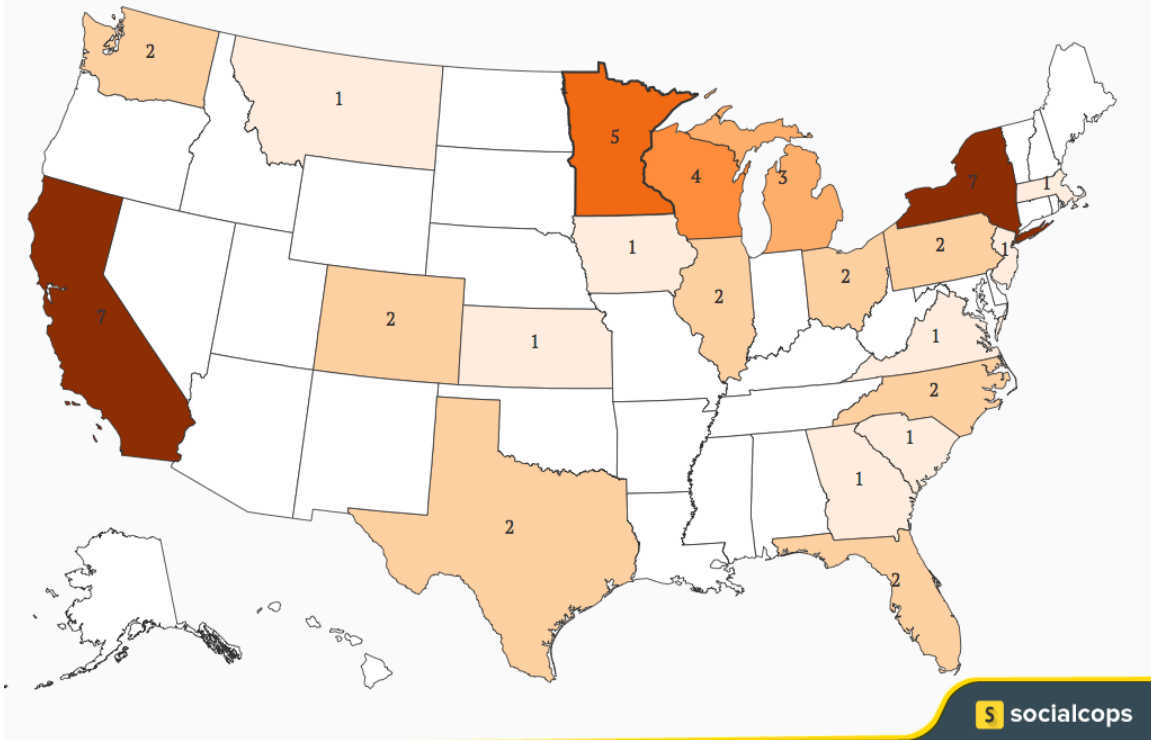


Figure 2. Invited speakers represented academic institutions in 21 states, Puerto Rico, Canada, and Spain. Speakers from industry, government entities, and NASA are not represented in the map.

Program accomplished “wide reach”

Most applicants find out about the grant opportunity through “an e-mail that was going around,” either directly from WISELI, or their department leaders. Others were aware of the opportunity through previous relationships with WISELI, such as participating in a previous grant funded event in a different department. One department was actively looking for funding to support bringing in an emerging scholar. Most participants reported high or sufficient rates of attendance. Lectures with the highest attendance attributed this to scheduling it within the departments’ seminar series. Invited speakers reached a sizeable campus audience due to the variety of departments and scientific disciplines they were associated with. Some events were open to community involvement, such as, inviting local Girl Scouts to see the woman engineers from NASA.

Program accomplished “deep reach”

Smaller group meetings, such as graduate student lunches, met the goal of intimate discussions that would have been less productive with a larger group. Discussion topics involved histories about career paths and overcoming barriers. Many invited speakers

also participated in one-on-one meetings with several faculty, researchers, and/or graduate students.

Analysis of Awardee Interviews

Ten interviews were conducted with awardees representing College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, School of Medicine and Public Health, Letters and Sciences, and the College of Engineering. Interviewees were informed about the purpose of the evaluation and in particular, the identification of long-term or long-lasting effects from the event or grant funding. The interview protocol began with a description and reminder about the event that occurred between 2 and 5 years prior. A semi-structured interview protocol was followed (Appendix B). Responses were de-identified and major themes are discussed below.

Purpose of the grant

A recurring theme in the grant applications and interviews is a focus on department demographics. There is concern over the ratio of male to female faculty members in comparison to male and female graduate students and incoming students. Faculty see the growing number of women in their departments and worry about the students' future careers and types of support available to them. Several interviewees state this awareness as their motivation for participating in the WISELI grant program.

Long-term effects

Four emergent themes related to long-term effects have been identified from interview data:

- *Hindsight-value*: Participating in the interview served as a reminder of how valuable the event was. Reflecting on the event and realizing how little is currently being done in their department to support women inspired the interviewees to say they would like to participate in the grant again or encourage others. They feel it would be positive to host more events centered around women in STEM and believe the grant program should continue.
- *Seed money effect*: At least two interviewees were able to create ongoing programming. One department created an annual event to welcome women to the field and help them make early connections with faculty. The other interviewee said every spring semester the department consistently hosts a professional development series for women. It is a financial planning, work/life balance, and leadership seminar series. Another interviewee believes she helped “break the cycle of men inviting men” to speak at the department symposium. In addition, most interviewees do not believe WISELI is solely responsible for promoting women in STEM but rather, they view WISELI as a partner or ally and enjoy working together toward a shared goal of advancing women in STEM. WISELI is seen as more than a provider; they are seen as a partner.

- *Faculty are dedicated to supporting women in STEM:* Many of the interviewees are professors that demonstrated their commitment to supporting female graduate students and increasing their exposure to role models. The importance of creating a positive climate for women in their department was also discussed. Faculty believe their department climate is good for women or at least trying to be.
- *Sends message to female students that they are valued and welcome:* One interviewee explained that hosting a well-integrated welcome event for incoming female students sends the message that UW cares enough to create a positive environment for them. This idea could be applied to other events supported by the institution, departments, and WISELI.

Interviewees were asked how they continue to support women in STEM. Their responses include:

- Be a good and hardworking role model.
- Include both historic and contemporary women’s issues in course curriculum.
- Continue to include female speakers in symposia and panels.
- Nominate women for leadership positions.
- Give women a chance to speak up in meetings.
- Mentor female students and point them to role models for career direction.
- Advocate for the importance of role models.
- Support recruitment of URM and female students and faculty.

Raising awareness

Interviewees discussed several outcomes or benefits of the events, such as raising awareness about women’s issues, and raising the profile of women on campus. Events were productive for raising awareness in both individual attendees and at a department level about issues such as: leaky pipeline, unconscious bias, current demographics in scientific disciplines, shifting demographics, and importance of role models. One interviewee said the event was a good opportunity for “directly addressing women’s issues” or having an intentional conversation about issues that are often a sideline.

Currently, females make-up around 50% of the graduate students in the STEM disciplines. When attending WISELI-sponsored events, they hear stories from women who were the “first” or “only” woman in the classroom, lab, field, or position of leadership. Professors say graduate students are interested in and inspired when invited speakers tell stories about their career path. An interesting occurrence in a graduate student lunch event involved the speaker going through each accomplishment on her CV. She revealed the challenges she faced and helpful tips for overcoming barriers to success. One interviewee said that when she sees female speakers from her field, they are typically policy focused; she was excited to bring a tech-focused speaker to raise the profile of women on campus.

Interviewees were asked their opinion on whether or not their specific speaker would have been invited to UW-Madison if WISELI grant funds were not available. Five interviewees had various explanations for how WISELI funding made their event possible. Funding for invited speakers is low overall. Another event relied on the money to provide an honorarium for the keynote speaker in a panel. The prominent keynote made the event a success. In another case, they were able to make the most out of the speaker's visit by being "able to do more things with her" such as additional lunch meetings or receptions. The invitation to speak had already been extended to one speaker before being notified of WISELI support. Her host said WISELI support increased the honor of her visit.

Overall comments

Interviewees were asked for overall comments about the event. A few were successful in creating programming that is now institutionalized; a few said it was a solitary event with little long term impacts. Not all interviewees were able to explain how their event met the goals of the grant. Two interviewees said it was sufficient to just have female speakers, and the speakers are role models for just being there. Another interviewee felt that he was not well-situated to contribute to the goals of the grant and his event was, "just another lecture."

One interviewee explained how funds were used to enhance the department's typical lecture series. They were able to support four speakers at different points in time. She explained the reason for the success of the events was the variety of topics and departments that got involved. She used a process of letting several faculty members suggest or nominate a woman speaker that they would like to see. Speakers were then selected to represent a variety of topics within the field and cross-disciplinary topics. This diversity increased the interest and attendance at events because other departments became involved.

Most interviewees were satisfied with their event and expressed interest in pursuing another award or organizing similar events. Another interviewee explained that she would not recommend hosting a reception because it was not productive or cost-efficient when people left sooner than expected. Only one interviewee expressed dissatisfaction with the event. This dissatisfaction was attributed to lack of time, resources, and skills for adequate planning of the visitor's schedule resulting in a discombobulated experience. Her explanation of an unintended outcome is that it was, "more effort than it was worth."

Support received from WISELI was satisfactory and interviewees felt it was a good partnership. A few interviewees said they would appreciate guidance from WISELI when it comes to discussion topics mostly for the brown bags with graduate students. Some of the invited speakers are familiar with discussing women's issues with groups, while others are not.

Opportunities for Improvement

Evaluate programs

One suggestion is to use a rubric for **assessing grant applications** to ensure alignment with the grant's goals of increasing visibility and representation of women in STEM. Encourage awardees to develop a list of goals, outcomes, or "take-aways" that they wish to accomplish at both a department level and individual level. This will help applicants go beyond the idea of women are role models for "just being there."

Continue to gather **post-event evaluation** information from awardees. This is a good way to continue to understand what types of events are feasible and enjoyable to attend, and how they support women in STEM. Encourage awardees to reflect on the extent to which they think they achieved their department level and individual level goals.

Encourage *deep reach*

Emphasize the purpose for the speaker's visit or event's intentions, which is to discuss issues relevant to women in STEM. Encourage departments that might not be aware of the issues women face in the field to invite women that specialize and have experience presenting on these topics. Provide the following information consistently to all awardees in the form of email attachments. Explain that they are optional suggestions:

- A list of recommended topics or discussion ideas central to women in STEM.
- A basic or general checklist of "visit guidelines," which can include information for scheduling events on campus. The "visit guidelines" checklist can also include grant fulfillment requirements so that the speaker's visit and their role in facilitating discussion about women is met.

Both of these ideas will ensure that the the host and guest can focus on the reason for the visit—to discuss issues related to women in STEM.

Encourage *wide reach*

Veterinary Medicine and Pharmacy departments are not represented in applications or awardees. Reach out to these departments to encourage and inspire institutional change in the form of programming for women.

What is *missing*

Currently, the programming planned by applicants focuses on the needs of female graduate students, or encourages networking among women for enhanced research opportunities. Encouraging programming for non-tenured women in STEM to achieve tenure and those with tenure to continue to advance their career, would provide a

missing area of support. According to Armstrong and Jovanovic's article *The Intersectional Matrix: Rethinking Institutional Change for URM Women in STEM*, equipping women to successfully progress in the pipeline at university or department level are useful activities. Their work also highlights the importance of an integrative intersectional approach to programming for successful institutional transformation and inclusion of URM female faculty. Considering Armstrong and Jovanovic's work around intersectionality and including goals explicitly relevant to URM women could enhance WISELI's Celebrating Women in Science and Engineering Grant Program.⁵

Conclusion

"The Celebrating Women in Science and Engineering Grant Program offers funding that enables sponsors in the physical and biological sciences, and engineering to bring prominent women speakers to the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus. The program aims to expose students and faculty to accomplished women scientists and engineers and to advance women in science and engineering on the UW campus. While on campus, invited speakers are able to contribute to these aims in a variety of venues, including research talks, small-group discussions, and one-on-one meetings."⁶

Evaluations from the last five years of the program indicate positive outcomes of the program and successful effects in supporting women in science and engineering such as:

- Increasing the visibility of women in a variety of science and engineering disciplines.
- Inviting additional speakers to ongoing departmental symposia (historically mostly male speakers, funds allow for inclusion of females).
- Providing role models in departments and fields in which the numbers of females are low (increasing number of female graduate students with few women in leadership positions and other female role models).
- Sending a message to women in STEM that the university, their department, and others support their needs and value their contributions.

Departments recognize the disconnect between student and faculty gender, and lack of female role models as a potential problem or barrier to address. WISELI's Celebrating Women in Science and Engineering grant program is a way to alleviate these barriers.

Isolation might not be an issue for graduate students, but is an issue for faculty. The ratio of female to male students and female to male faculty is still far from equal. Increasing student exposure to role models will hopefully contribute to solving the problem of the leaky pipeline. The content of the interviews and the hosted events

⁵ Armstrong, M.A., & Jovanovic, J. (2016, March 21). The Intersectional Matrix: Rethinking Institutional Change for URM Women in STEM. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*.

⁶ Kerr, B., Winchell, J., & Pribbenow, C. (October, 2010). WISELI's Celebrating Women in Science & Engineering Grant Program: Evaluation Report, 2002-2009.

focused on the needs of incoming female students and an expectation that faculty make-up will shift to include more females as they get positions in academe. At this point, women might need more direct information about obtaining and retaining faculty positions than just exposure to role models.

The grant program is successful for creating well-attended events geared toward increasing the visibility of women in science and engineering. Five interviewees had various explanations for how WISELI funding made their event possible. The funding continues to serve a purpose because departments have limited capacity for inviting speakers. When a speaker is invited to UW with WISELI funding, there is value added because the resulting event will expose women to role models, increase the feeling of belonging for women in science and engineering at UW, raise the profile of women on campus, and strengthen networking between women scientists. Graduate students feel they are valued by the university and important enough to invite speakers specifically geared toward their interests and in the interest of improving their experience at UW and in their future.

Appendix A: Required Evaluation Form

Name of Grant Recipient:

Title of Program:

Name of Speaker/s:

Date of Event/s:

Event/s Held:	# Attendees
Lecture	
Brown Bag Presentation	
Dinner	
Reception	
Other:	
Other:	
Other:	

1. Please provide a brief description of the program and all events held. Please include a description of the topics discussed at each event, the audience each event attracted (e.g., faculty, post docs, graduate students, etc.), and how the speaker/s interacted with those who attended the event/s.
2. Please describe your assessment of the reactions/responses of event attendees to the speaker and/or events held?
3. Please describe the ways in which the speaker and the events held helped to promote the participation and advancement of women in science and engineering.
4. What were the best aspects of the speaker/s visit?
5. If you had the chance to plan this program again, what would you have done differently? What could WISELI have done differently?

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Introduction

1. Confirm name/department/brief description of event.
2. How did you hear about the Celebrating Women in Science and Engineering grant and what motivated you to apply?

Program Impact

3. Did you notice any changes in your department directly/immediately after the event?
4. Have you seen any long-term impacts or unintended outcomes from participating in the grant? Anything that you did not expect to happen?
5. Do you think your department/organization would have heard from this female speaker if they were not invited here with WISELI funding?
6. In what ways could you or do you continue to promote the advancement of women in science due to the event?

Program Improvement

7. What could you have done differently for your event to have a greater impact on women in science?
8. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience with the Women in Science and Engineering Grant Program?