

## Abstract

Our 2012 cohort of new STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) faculty was unusually rich with females (5 out of 8). The influx of STEM women during the second year of the Women in Science and Engineering at Oakland University (WISE@OU) National Science Foundation (NSF) PAID grant provided a unique opportunity to make a lasting difference in our STEM faculty gender balance. Early in fall 2012 our grant-savvy co-PI initiated individual meetings with each new hire, reviewing a detailed list of practical grant-related information. Beginning in winter 2013, WISE@OU commenced with the Center for Biomedical Research a series of new faculty luncheons, including cohorts from 2012, 2011, and eventually 2013. Topics thus far have included: junior faculty member presenting to the group her experiences at two NSF-funded workshops; welcoming of 2013 faculty and distribution of [Guide for STEM Faculty at Oakland University](#); and, most recently, a Q&A session with a critical grant officer. WISE@OU has received enthusiastic, positive feedback from this group. By keeping a close connection with this vital cohort, WISE@OU has been able to craft additional programs including: workshop on internal grant opportunities and discussion on interdisciplinary research at OU. Beyond formal events, this initiative has created a comfortable network in which this group can thrive.

## Hiring STEM Faculty

	Total Hired	Male	Female	Bio	Chem	SECS	Math	Phys
2008 Cohort	4	2	2	1	1	1	1	0
2009 Cohort	6	4	2	3	1	1	1	0
2010 Cohort	3	2	1	1	1	0	1	0
2011 Cohort	5	3	2	0	1	2	1	1
2012 Cohort	8	3	5	2	1	4	1	0
2013 Cohort	3	2	1	2	1	0	0	0

This table shows the recent hiring data for assistant professors in the STEM departments at Oakland University. Departments include Biological Sciences, Chemistry, the School of Engineering and Computer Science, Mathematics and Statistics, and Physics. In 2012, the STEM faculty cohort was predominately female – a first for OU.

## Providing Grants Information

Our co-PI visited one-on-one with newly hired STEM professors to assist them with navigation of the available grants and research information and resources available on campus. Below is a list of the information that he shared.

### Items to Discuss on WISE@OU Research Visits

- Center for Biomedical Research (CBR) – [www.oakland.edu/cbr](http://www.oakland.edu/cbr)  
CBR brochure, membership  
Research Excellence Fund  
Annual report  
Equipment inventory (online)
- WISE@OU / ADVANCE – [www.oakland.edu/advance](http://www.oakland.edu/advance)  
"Looking into the Future" flier  
Upcoming event: Q&A session with Academic Human Resources
- Grants Office – [www.oakland.edu/research](http://www.oakland.edu/research)  
Recent "OU Research" magazine  
Main contacts in the grants office  
Procedure to apply for grants (EPRA, budget, fringe benefits, overhead)  
Research Guidelines manual (online)  
Compliance issues (IBR, IACUC, radiation, biosafety)
- Sources of Funding  
Internal  
University Research Committee; Provost student awards;  
Research Excellence Fund; OU-Beaumont awards; GReAT tuition program  
External  
COS (Pivot) – [pivot.cos.com](http://pivot.cos.com); Research Development & Grant Writing News;  
CBR and grants office pre-peer review programs; proofreading for grants;  
NIH/NSF experience; grant writing tips
- Other Resources  
Institute for Stem Cell and Regenerative Medicine – [www.oakland.edu/isrcm](http://www.oakland.edu/isrcm)  
OU INC – [www.oakland.edu/ouinc](http://www.oakland.edu/ouinc)  
MichBio – [www.michbio.org](http://www.michbio.org)  
Medical Main Street – [www.advantageoakland.com](http://www.advantageoakland.com)

## Sharing Experiences

WISE@OU and the Center for Biomedical Research host luncheons each semester for junior STEM faculty. During one event, a faculty member shared her experiences from two NSF-focused workshops. She discussed tips for talking with a Program Director, presenting research ideas, suggesting reviewers, and budgeting. Her top advice was: "Ask Early, Ask Often!" The presentation is posted on the [WISE@OU website](#). (Attendance = 22)

Lunch attendees praised the event:

"I really enjoyed our conversation and exchange of ideas.

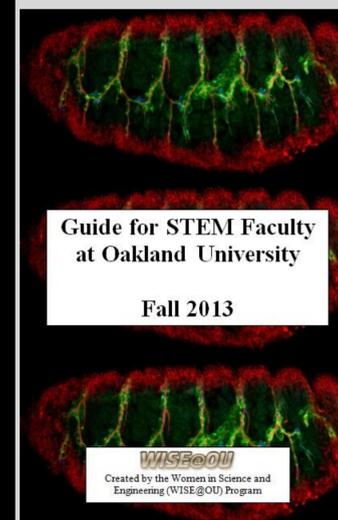
We are so fortunate to have WISE here at OU to reach out to us. It was a lot fun to get to talk to everyone and learn from each other." (Assistant Professor of Engineering)

"I very much appreciate this opportunity the WISE program provides us." (Assistant Professor of Engineering)

"More regular gatherings of STEM faculty sounds like a great idea to me! It was great to have a chance to meet more of you..." (Assistant Professor of Biology)

## Guiding STEM Faculty

WISE@OU started the Fall 2013 semester with the creation of the [Guide for STEM Faculty at Oakland University](#), which was distributed to all STEM assistant professors and posted on the WISE@OU website.



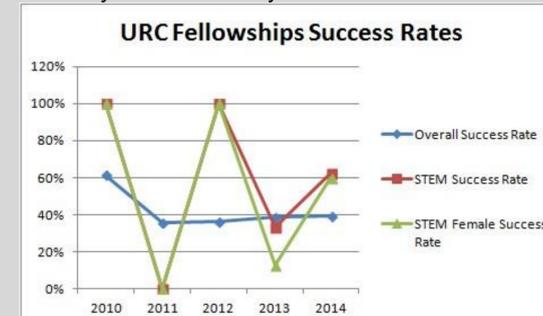
Cover image courtesy of Professor Lan Jiang, OU Department of Biological Sciences

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## Obtaining Internal Fellowships

The University Research Committee fellowship is a competitive internal award and important source of summer salary for junior faculty. From our data, it was clear that STEM faculty were not always successful with this award.



To help STEM faculty have greater success in receiving this funding, WISE@OU hosted an informational workshop about applying for this fellowship. During this event, the Vice Provost for Research discussed how to approach grant writing for a general audience. WISE@OU provided practical suggestions, using recent successful STEM applications as examples of how to apply for the award. Peer review of applications was also offered.

(Attendance = 32)

## Meeting with a Grant Officer

As STEM faculty expressed the desire to know more about the grant process and connect with the grants staff on campus, WISE@OU organized an informal question and answer session with a grant officer from the OU Office of Research Administration. This was an opportunity for recently hired STEM faculty to get to know one of the important members of the grants staff and ask questions related to grant applications and funding. Tips from this discussion were later posted on the [WISE@OU website](#). (Attendance = 15)

## Partnering with Sigma Xi and CETL

Oakland University has an active chapter of Sigma Xi, the national scientific research society. WISE@OU partnered with Sigma Xi to create a lunchtime program focused on interdisciplinary research, an area of interest for many STEM faculty. Members of the WISE@OU team facilitated a discussion which identified the strengths of interdisciplinary research opportunities on campus and forged connections between STEM faculty from all departments. The discussion allowed faculty members to introduce their research and find colleagues who might be interested in working with them. The audience members were both junior and senior faculty and shared a variety of opinions and experiences during the seminar. (Attendance = 50)



Through a partnership with the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL), WISE@OU hosted multiple workshops for faculty that relay information about the best practices for mentoring and time management, with a specific focus on STEM faculty careers. The workshops were facilitated by a member of the WISE@OU leadership team and the panel discussions allowed STEM faculty to share their insight and answer colleagues' questions. Attendees included both tenured and untenured faculty members which led to beneficial exchanges of ideas and suggestions.

(Attendance = 19)

## Contact Information

Visit our website at [www.oakland.edu/advance](http://www.oakland.edu/advance).  
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