



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Rachel Sparrow
(215) 255-7328

rsparrow@drexelmed.edu

Drexel University College of Medicine to participate in national study evaluating barriers to success for women in academic medicine

NIH-supported research will analyze recruitment, retention, and promotion

PHILADELPHIA (October 5, 2009) – Why are women faculty leaving academic medicine at alarmingly high rates and what are the barriers women face in attaining positions of leadership at academic health centers? Those are questions that will be analyzed as part of a national study which hopes to shed light on the culture change needed to improve recruitment and retention of women in science and lead to the development of policy regarding professional development for improving representation of women faculty at the highest levels of leadership in academic medical institutions.

The study, funded by a one million dollar grant from the National Institutes of Health, will be conducted over four years by researchers from the University of New Mexico, the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, and Drexel University College of Medicine in Philadelphia, PA. The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) is also collaborating on the grant.

The goal of the research is to assess the impact of participation in intensive career development training programs on individual women faculty at early and mid-career stages. Specifically, the study will evaluate three long-standing nationally renowned programs, and compare the career success of women who participated in the programs to women and men, at the same career stages, who did not participate.

“The statistics show that historically, retention and promotion of women in academic medicine has not kept pace with that of men in the same institutions,” said Deborah L. Helitzer, Sc.D., professor of family and community medicine and assistant dean for research education at the University of New Mexico School of Medicine, who is principal investigator of the study. “As a result, there have been national efforts to improve these indicators. This project will help us to know whether participating in any one or more of these programs influences the retention and promotion rates of women faculty.”

The programs are the AAMC Early Career Women Faculty Professional Development Seminar, the AAMC Mid-Career Women Faculty Professional Development Seminar, and the Hedwig van Ameringen Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine® Program for Women (ELAM) at Drexel University College of Medicine.

ELAM Founding Director Page S. Morahan, Ph.D., is a co-investigator on the study, along with Diane Magrane, M.D., Director, Center for Executive Leadership in Academics at Drexel University College of Medicine, and Shine Chang, Ph.D., professor of epidemiology and director of the Cancer Prevention Research Training Program at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center.

###