



**University of Virginia  
NSF ADVANCE Institutional Transformation Grant**

**“Structured Conversations and Re-imagined Spaces:  
Effecting Systemic Change for Women in STEM at UVA”**

**ABSTRACT**

The goal of the University of Virginia ADVANCE Program is to increase the number of women, including African American, Latina and Asian American women, in the STEM disciplines and to create an empowered collaborative, participatory form of community that draws on the collective capacity of women faculty, their male colleagues and administrative leadership allies to identify and ameliorate the structural and cultural barriers to women's full participation in academic STEM careers. Through several clearly defined initiatives that include semester-long facilitated dialogue processes to improve departmental climate, re-imagined spaces, a focus on the intellectual and life history of senior and retired women to amplify women's presence, an interactive search and selection portal, an innovation tournament to tap the power of diversity and divergent thinking, and an Advance Enhancement fund to support STEM women's research and scholarship, the University of Virginia will engage both women and men faculty in open and authentic dialogue about a shared and inclusive future for the institution. Drawing on a complex, diversity systems theory of change as adaptive, this transformation initiative will lead to seminal social science results and promote interventions to render institutional physical environments more welcoming for diverse groups.