

“Empowering individuals for a stronger future”

The University of Minnesota (UMN), and its respective colleges, strive to ensure all people reach their full potential. The College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences (CFANS) at UMN continues to make great strides in this area.

While we have seen a shift towards greater participation by women in all fields and occupations, we still see significant gaps. Certain fields experience this even more acutely, such as engineering, computer science, mathematics, and a range of science fields¹. Though several of the fields represented in CFANS are now reaching participation close to the 50% mark, women still lag both in senior roles and in their overall career paths. The ability to provide targeted support for women in these fields can have a significant impact, not only for the individuals directly, but also for future students and faculty, and for those in the organizations and universities that will hire them.

To address these issues, CFANS has established the **Artemisia Leadership Initiative**. The initiative aims to empower scientists and strengthen their capacity to respond to future challenges in food, agriculture and natural resources by addressing gender-based barriers and improving leadership skills. The initiative is named after Artemisia, an ambitious and powerful leader, botanist, and medical scientist.

CFANS is in a unique place where several elements have come together in recent months. Now is the right time to launch this broad, ambitious effort in a sustaining and highly impactful way due to:

- **Significant “pull” from the students and faculty at CFANS.** In meetings throughout 2016 and 2017, graduate students, post-docs and faculty continually voiced strong support, and a desire, for an effort to address issues that women face throughout their academic and professional careers.
- **Clear and vocal support from administrators in CFANS and UMN.** This initiative has been supported from the onset by the CFANS administrators and beyond.
- **CFANS moving in the right direction.** There are numerous indicators that CFANS is already moving in the right direction in line with their overall strategy (e.g., 5 of the 12 CFANS programs have female department heads).
- **Several student- and faculty-led efforts at other colleges at UMN.** Initiatives focused on women in STEM fields have popped up across campus, indicating the heightened interest.

These factors all support a broad trend to further address the issues facing women in science and increase the probability that a structured, comprehensive effort will draw from the shared expertise and experiences of those in CFANS and succeed.

The **Artemisia Leadership Initiative** will engage its partners, alumni and the community at large to support its several programs which include a speaker seminar series, facilitated mentoring circle discussion groups, and a comprehensive leadership development workshop.

¹ From the “National Girls Collaborative Project”, STEM Workforce: <https://ngcproject.org/statistics>

The College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resources (CFANS) at the University of Minnesota has recognized the importance of finding tangible solutions for the issues that women in the sciences face. To lead the way, the college is launching the **Artemisia Leadership Initiative**, focused on improving leadership skills among female scientists, and in turn, strengthening the capacity of industry and academia to solve future agricultural, food, and environmental challenges as stated in its ambitious mission:

The Artemisia Leadership Initiative inspires and empowers female scientists and strengthens overall capacity to respond to future challenges in food, agriculture and natural resources by addressing gender-based barriers and improving leadership skills. Our network of students, faculty, staff, alumni and external partners is a catalyst for igniting conversation, sharing tools, building skills, mentoring, and inspiring action that maximizes our workforce and lifts the leadership potential within industry and academia. The initiative is named after Artemisia, an ambitious and powerful leader, botanist, and medical scientist. The genus Artemisia is named after her and contains over 200 species of flowering plants, including sagebrush, a resilient species, which lives and thrives in some of the harshest environments.

The Artemisia Leadership Initiative is being kicked off with a **seminar series** this fall and **facilitated mentoring circles** to have more in-depth discussions within peer groups. Capitalizing on the needs assessed throughout the seminar series and mentoring circle discussions, a comprehensive **leadership development workshop** will be offered.

Seminar series

- Highly accomplished women invited to discuss their personal journeys and to address relevant issues facing women on campus.
- Scheduled once monthly and open to anyone to create a good space for discussion across genders, programs, etc.

Facilitated mentoring circles

- Smaller, focused discussion groups will meet between the scheduled seminars to further explore topics of concern to members of each of the specific groups and to respond to those needs in creative ways.
- Mentoring circles will be relatively small (7-8 people) to facilitate participation from all members of the group and will be purposefully arranged to have participants in similar career stages and career paths (i.e. graduate students, post-doc, faculty, staff) to allow for peer mentorship.
- Each mentoring circle will have a “lead” to facilitate discussions, as needed, and ensure a positive space for all participants.
- Mentoring circle leads will meet together to discuss common areas of concern among their groups to help shape the content of the leadership development workshop and subsequent seminar topics.

Leadership development workshop

- Workshop to develop skills and address needs that have been highlighted through internal and external discussions (i.e. negotiation, interpersonal, mentoring, and amplification skills) to truly empower and support women in their current and future roles.
- Supported by an alumni steering group of women that have risen to leadership positions who will leverage personal leadership development experiences in business and industry to introduce to women on campus.

Artemisia leadership committee: Sarah Castle, Karen Dewanz, Susan Galatowitsch, Candice Hirsch, Frances Homans, Shefali Mehta, Dawn Seibert, Rebecca Swenson, Ami Thompson, Marcella Windmuller-Campione