

ATN UNIVERSITIES SECURE INTERNATIONAL FUNDING FOR GENDER EQUITY CONFERENCE

The Carnegie Corporation of New York has swung its support behind a major international conference to be held in Adelaide, which will examine the issue of gender equity in Australia's universities.

The five universities of the ATN, through its highly acclaimed women's executive development program WEXDEV, have secured a US \$25,000 grant from the corporation, which was founded by Andrew Carnegie in 1911 to 'promote the advancement and diffusion of knowledge and understanding'.

The Carnegie funding will enable nine delegates from African universities in Nigeria, Ghana, Uganda, Tanzania and the Republic of South Africa to speak at the conference: *Change in Climate? Prospects for gender equity in universities*, which will take place in Adelaide, South Australia, from 11-13 April 2006.

The delegates include professors of women's studies, directors of equity programs and senior administrators, linked with the Carnegie program for Strengthening African Universities. Delegates will share information, hear about programs that can be adapted to African institutions and establish strong networking opportunities with their counterparts from Australia, Canada, USA, UK, Europe, India, Pakistan and China.

ATN Director Vicki Thomson said whilst throughout the world the higher education sector had proved slow to reach full equality in employment for female staff, particularly at senior levels – the situation in Australia was changing.

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“Australia has witnessed a dramatic change in the position of women in its universities. Women already represent the majority of students at universities, and although a minority on the higher education career ladder, particularly at more senior levels, there are some promising developments.

“However this situation has not come about without a concerted effort, and a good deal of hard work on the part of our universities. Many universities make a concerted effort to promote the advancement of women, but ATN WEXDEV is unique in the higher education sector in that it works across the five universities of the ATN to promote professional development opportunities for women.

“Women climbing the ladder in ATN universities can therefore benefit from both a network that extends across the country and the strong links that all ATN universities have established with business, industry, government and community organisations,” Ms Thomson said.

The conference will hear from keynote speakers who are in positions of power and who are able to influence change in improving governance including six female Vice-Chancellors. It is anticipated that 72 papers will be presented over the three day conference.

“This conference will provide an opportunity to bring together women from around the world - academics, administrators, researchers, and equity practitioners - to learn from each other, to hear about the most recent research, and to affirm our commitment to ensuring that universities in the future benefit from the full involvement of all their female staff.”

For further information about the Conference visit the conference website:

<http://www.sapmea.asn.au/conventions/wexdev2006/index.html>

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