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The impact of male-led training on changing gender perceptions: Early results from Advocates and Allies training sessions in the USA and Germany

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While the data show that female and non-binary scientists continue to be underrepresented, the path toward addressing this issue can differ with gender identity. Traditionally, much of the gender equity advocacy work is done by women and others not identifying as part of the majority male group. Since men dominate faculty demographics on campus, however, this group needs to be involved in any change in social norms. While many men do care about and understand gender diversity issues, they may not possess the understanding, vocabulary, or skills to turn their good intentions into actions.

We will present results from two pilot program updates to an existing program, Advocates and Allies. This program focuses on how men can be better advocates for and allies to women in the workplace. The course will be taught by men, for men, creating both a potentially depolarizing environment and providing role modeling for change. Included topics include professional networks, implicit bias, work culture, effective communication, and dealing with pushback. We will show initial feedback from two test runs of this program, one in the USA (University of Kentucky) and one in Germany (Technical University of Munich).

The impact of these programs will be assessed in two ways. First, a perceptions survey will be administered to look for immediate shifts. These results will be compared to a larger dataset of other iterations of this male-led training, though the curriculum will not be identical. Second, we will begin to assess the professional networks of participants before and after these workshops. Collaboration lists will be made based on publications in publicly available databases using published algorithms. While we acknowledge that gender identification by name is challenging and imperfect, we hope to identify broad trends outside identification errors. Additionally, changes by individual participants will be investigated. We welcome feedback and ideas for future iterations of both the curriculum presented and assessment tools.