

**YEAR 1 EXTERNAL EVALUATION: SEATTLE  
UNIVERSITY ADVANCE-IT**

**WHAT COUNTS AS SUCCESS? RECOGNIZING AND REWARDING  
WOMEN FACULTY'S DIFFERENTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS IN A  
COMPREHENSIVE LIBERAL ARTS UNIVERSITY**

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## Executive Summary

Seattle University (SU) has completed its first year of a five-year NSF-funded ADVANCE-IT grant, “What Counts as Success? Recognizing and Rewarding Women Faculty’s Differential Contributions in a Comprehensive Liberal Arts University.” The overall goal is institutional cultural and structural transformation that brings the promotion standards, perceived expectations, and mentoring processes fully into line with the values-based educational mission of the university.

The three project aims are to achieve institutional transformation in the form of:

- Cultural shift around the faculty activities that count toward tenure and promotion, with a specific emphasis on promotion for women faculty in STEM and SBE fields;
- Procedural changes in the form of revised promotion guidelines that clearly include mission related activities as valued and articulate paths toward promotion;
- Structural change to include formal mentoring and training for both faculty and administrators as a basis of sustained education and support for the multi-track promotion policy.

The external evaluation of the grant’s first year covers the period of September 2016 (grant start date) through August 2017. Drawing upon both quantitative and qualitative data, this report highlights progress toward the goals of SU ADVANCE and offers recommendations to facilitate long-term impacts.

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### Summary of Institutional Baseline Data:

Pertinent to the focus on gendered outcomes of faculty promotion, especially the promotion to full professor, key baseline metrics include:

- Half (four out of eight) of STEM departments have no female full professors
- Two out of five SBS departments have no female full professors (although three out of five have no male full professors)
- In STEM, 25% of female associate professors have been in rank fifteen years or longer; in contrast 10% of male associate professors have been in rank this long
- In SBS, 21% of female and 5% of male associate professors have been in rank fifteen years or longer
- The bulk of STEM and SBS faculty (both males and females) are at the rank of associate professor, suggesting focus on promotion to full professor is essential for improving gender equity

### Key Findings from Year 1 Activities:

Activities during the first year of the grant focused on the Phase 1 activities of Information Gathering and Strategic Communication. Grounded in the participatory action research approach, these two activities were deliberately interconnected and comprised of mutual feedback loops as each evolved to inform the other. In interviews, stakeholders were able to articulate the recursive and synergistic process of these activities and how they strengthened the team’s ability to lay the groundwork necessary from which to launch Phase 2 activities.

The participatory action research approach also provided the framework to support stakeholder engagement with the tension between the university's mission and the current promotion practices that prioritize research. The ability to wrestle with this tension and reconcile the ways that promotion practices can embrace mission activities and institutional service are essential for developing campus-wide ownership of the grant goals.

The social science research is underway after numerous rounds of revision requested from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). With approval now granted, the team is collecting data in the form of semi-structured interviews, with focus groups to follow during Year 2. The extension of the research at Loyola Marymount (comparison institution) is expected to begin in Year 2.

### **Key Recommendations:**

#### *Management and Structure:*

- Think strategically about how to best use the advisory boards, periodically revisiting these decisions to ensure the boards are meeting the ongoing needs.
- Continue to expand the team (including strong male allies) to engage with the work of the grant.
- ADVANCE leadership should report directly to the provost to better position the program for long-term institutionalization and capitalize on opportunities to coordinate ADVANCE efforts with other institutional priorities.

#### *Messaging and Dissemination:*

- Ensure the main talking points for strategic communication are documented and made available to all team members so that communication is consistent and can be shared with the research team at Loyola Marymount.
- Document the participatory action research process and the continual feedback between the information gathering and strategic communication so that this method can be disseminated to other institutions.
- Populate the website with additional information to engage campus stakeholders and help disseminate information to other institutions.

#### *Data and Evaluation*

- Discuss what types of quantitative data (including data from previous institutional climate surveys) might be available to complement the qualitative data.
- Determine if SU intends to conduct a climate survey soon and if so, whether SU ADVANCE may add a few questions pertinent to the grant's objectives.
- Collect and report data on the number and percent of women by rank that serve as department chairs. Use findings to guide Phase 2 work.
- Devise new logic model and evaluation timeline that links Phase 2 activities with goals and which includes outputs, outcomes, and indicators (short and longer-term) to guide the evaluation efforts. The activities undertaken by the internal evaluator may also shift somewhat as the project transitions into Phase 2.

#### *Stakeholder Engagement and Partnerships*

- Ensure a strong, collaborative, and more integrated partnership with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and other key campus partners; be strategic about where project initiatives may “land” and involve these partners now in the development and implementation of these initiatives.
- Continue to engage with Loyola Marymount to finalize the cross-institutional research plans and begin data collection in Year 2.

*NSF 3rd Year Site Visit*

- Launch key Phase 2 activities as early as possible in Year 2 so that their impacts can be evaluated to prepare for the 3rd Year NSF Site Visit (which could come as early as Fall 2018).
- Toward the end of Year 2, consider utilizing the External Advisory Board to help prepare for the site visit. Other institutions have found that live feedback from the EAB on the site visit presentation, for example, has been extremely useful.

To conclude, SU ADVANCE has established a solid foundation in Year 1 from which the Phase 2 activities can be launched. A detailed timeline and an updated evaluation plan for Phase 2 will support efforts to assess the impacts of their work and disseminate findings to assist other institutions who are seeking ways to align service with institutional excellence.