

**“What Counts as Success?  
Recognizing and Rewarding Women Faculty’s Differential  
Contributions in a Comprehensive Liberals Arts University”**

**NSF ADVANCE: INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION  
SEATTLE UNIVERSITY**

**INTERNAL EVALUATORS ANNUAL REPORT – YEAR ONE  
SEPTEMBER 2016 - SEPTEMBER 2017**

Internal Evaluator  
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# **Executive Summary:**

## **A Descriptive Foundation of the SU ADVANCE Program**

This annual report focuses on evaluating Phase One activities associated with the specific year one goals between September 2016 and September 2017.

In general, this report addresses three basic questions about the first year of the SU NSF ADVANCE program (hereafter Program):

1. Is the Program doing what it said it would do to carry out its aims?
2. What is the Program team learning as they are delivering its events and activities?
3. How is ongoing learning informing and shaping the team's decisions regarding future activities and structures of events?

### **Seattle University Focus**

The overall goal of the Program is institutional, structural and cultural transformation. The Program's aims and activities occupy the conceptual and structural spaces at the intersection of mission, gender and the role of service at the time of seeking tenure and promotion from the rank of associate to professor. The Program uses the participatory action research and institutional change models to accomplish its goals. Particular attention focuses on the hiring and retention of a diverse faculty.

The aim of the Program is institutional transformation in the form of:

1. Cultural shift around the faculty activities that count toward tenure and promotions with a specific emphasis on promotion for women faculty in STEM and SBE fields;
2. Procedural change in the form of revised promotion guidelines that clearly include mission-related activities (e.g., leadership service, community engagement, science education) as valued and articulated paths toward promotion (e.g., differentiated tracks);
3. Structural change to include formal mentoring and training for both faculty and administrators as the basis of sustained education and support for the differentiated-track promotion policy.

### **Specific Year One Goals**

1. Establishing programmatic support and raising awareness within the university (Strategic Communications);
2. External communications and networking (SU ADVANCE website, networking and data collection, conference attendance, forming internal and external advisory groups);
3. Office and personnel set-up (Research and support team hires and refinement of hiring plan, securing office space, preparing for NSF site visit);
4. Launching the research phase of the project (participant observation at various administrative and faculty forums, semi-structured interviews with SU faculty and administrators, and focus groups with SU faculty).

### **Year One Activities**

From September 2016 - 2017, the Program was involved in Phase One activities that are advancing the first of the following three aims:

***Aim 1:** 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.*

***Phase One:** Establishing programmatic support and raising awareness within the university – Strategic Communication and Information Gathering.*

Research Activities: Qualitative research, based on extensive interviews and focus groups with Seattle University faculty, is ongoing. The target is 60 individual interviews. As of October 2017, there have been 25 faculty members (women and men) interviewed and extensive participant observation has been conducted. Faculty interviewed thus far are primarily from the colleges of Science & Engineering and Arts & Sciences, but we have also attracted interviewees from the School of Business, the College of Nursing, and the College of Education. We intend to draw from the other colleges and schools as well.

Strategic Communications. Activities have been delivered as planned and with the results anticipated. All stakeholder groups were identified and met with during this phase of the Program. The goal of finding high visibility office space to house the ADVANCE Program was accomplished. Additionally, all personnel have been hired including student workers who are assigned duties commensurate with their level of training and interest. The IE and the Program Team meet regularly to discuss the various activities for which the members are responsible. The participatory action research model relies on consistent and high-quality conversations between the various Team members to be successful. The role of the IE in these meetings is to be a participant observer and gather notes on process and problems should they arise.

Internal Evaluator Activities:

1. Revision of logic map based on feedback from Strategic Communications activity;
2. Participation in regular Program Team meetings and Executive Team meetings;
3. Researcher debriefs from Information Gathering activity conducted regularly;
4. Mapping research themes into next round of activities in Phase Two jointly with Program Team and Executive Team.

### **Discussion of Status and Results**

The Program is on the way to establishing itself as a vibrant and important activity and resource for the university community.

Carrying Out Plan: The Program is carrying out its plan and making revisions to specific activities as was anticipated from the participatory action research model utilized. Documenting how the participatory method is working ‘on-the-ground’, how it surfaces concerns, attitudes, and perceptions not anticipated fully, and how it is affecting the form/structure/content and evolution of next steps in the project is an ongoing part of the overall program.

Program Learning: At the end of year one of the ADVANCE grant, the Program Team has shown it desires to and can learn from its own activities. IE reflections on themes emerging this

year, point to a team that is maturing in its identity as holders of an important campus resource with the potential to substantively change university culture and policy. The presenters of the Strategic Communications phase have shaped their understanding of the roadblocks or barriers (implicit and explicit) to bring the goals and rhetoric of a mission-driven university in alignment with its practices and culture.

Re-Shaping Future Activities: Team meetings have become a vibrant place for discourse, deliberation, and direction setting. The shift to more of a shared ownership of the Program and all its aspects is underway. The importance of training ourselves to ‘read’ various products of scholarship that fall outside R1 markers of success, as valuable to promotion and retention of STEM and SBS faculty, has become clearer to the Team. The Team acknowledges that an institution as multifaceted as ours, with pulls toward disciplinary hegemony, does not serve this particular institution well. In devising future activities of Phase Two, attention will be paid to articulating an institution with policies that fit its own aspirations and which demonstrates valuing collaboration in its revised standards for promotion and tenure.