

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

**NSF ADVANCE: INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION
SEATTLE UNIVERSITY
INTERIM REPORT – YEAR THREE
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Executive Summary

The aim of the SU ADVANCE program is institutional transformation in the form of:

- Cultural shift toward recognizing and rewarding a more comprehensive range of faculty activities that count toward tenure and promotion (with a specific emphasis on promotion for women faculty in STEM and SBE fields);
- Procedural change in the form of revised promotion guidelines that clearly include mission-related activities as valued and included in articulated paths toward promotion; and,
- Structural change to include formal mentoring and training for both faculty and administrators as a basis of sustained education and support for a more comprehensive promotion policy.

SU ADVANCE has completed each of the activities as indicated in the Organizational Plan (December 15, 2016) for Phase One (years 1-2) and successfully transitioned to Phase Two in the third year as planned. The Internal Evaluator’s Third-Year Report, submitted in December 2018, concludes that:

All activities were delivered in accordance with the project timeline. As ongoing and iterative feedback is the heart of the methodology behind the Project, it continues now with renewed depth and breadth” (p.21).

The key aim for Year Three (Phase Two) of the Project is the concurrent development of a Mentoring the Mentors program (cultural education) and a Task Force on Revised Promotion Guidelines (procedural change). Through the multi-level, participatory action research model (PAR) that guides our work, we have been especially generative this past year in our strategic engagement with a wide range of university offices and groups. This iterative process has resulted in expanded activities and opportunities (beyond the initial program design) that include:

- Expanded research design to include systematic analysis of “faculty activities” resulting in a comprehensive “faculty activities inventory.”
- Team expansion to include expertise in evolving project areas such as comprehensive content analysis, women’s leadership, collaborative mentoring, and Boyer-focused models of scholarship.
- Formal consulting visits to provide fresh insight, stimulate broader thinking, and intentionally engage a wide range of university personnel.
- Opportunities for team leaders to participate in national-level programs such as “Beyond Advance” and Ignatian Colleagues Leadership Program.
- Invitations to present project information to key stakeholders including regional Dean’s Councils, College and School-level faculty organizations, Academic Assembly, discipline-specific conferences and AJCU groups.

The full report opens with a note on PAR methodology as it has informed our thinking and planning in the past year and includes a detailed overview of our third activities organized as: Program Organization and Management; Research Activity; Strategic Engagement and Consulting; Phase Two Activities; and Looking Ahead.

Generative Participatory Action Research (PAR) and Institutional Transformation

A hallmark of SU ADVANCE is our energetic commitment to generative learning and ongoing program elaboration in response to feedback from varied groups across multiple levels of the institution as well as from an expanding network of national groups and consultants. These engagements serve as constant reminders that cultural transformation is a slow process drawing from multiple sources, ebbing and flowing at different rates, but with gathering momentum as we can bank our efforts into a more channeled stream flowing toward vibrant faculty careers formally recognized through promotion.

The result has been 1) elaborated themes increasingly more reflective of our campus community; opportunities for cross-sharing of these emergent themes with promise for re-framing (e.g., formative evaluative with deans – informs mentoring), and 2) expanded teams/participation with opportunities to model effective cross-communication, and formative engagement that best supports women and their more comprehensive activities.

I- Program Organization and Management

Following feedback from formal evaluations in previous years, we have continued to reflect intentionally on team management processes that encourage co-responsibility for the project (rather than rely on one or two individuals); invite wider shared investment across campus; and ensure ongoing support and input from upper-level administration. Highlights include:

- A.** Team expansion and adjusted organization include multiple, co-operating sub-teams managing various aspects of the program, with liaisons from each sub-team meeting regularly for effective cross-communication and planning. These sub-teams include executive coordination; task force coordination; mentoring program committee; resource library and internship coordination; evaluation; and budget and personnel. Each sub-team is led by a member of the executive team and meets regularly (at least bi-weekly). The executive team meets weekly with an agenda that prioritizes communication with one or more of the sub-teams depending on timing of various activities. This inter-connected organizational format enables us to practice ongoing recursive feedback, recognizes expert leadership in sub-specific domains, and expands overall involvement channeled into specific activities (i.e., individual participants contribute their expertise effectively in task-based groups which is more satisfying than sitting on large-scale committees). PAR is so central to our program, we prioritize immediate communication feedback loops (e.g., in every meeting we have immediate follow-up communication “to do’s” aimed at keeping up a vibrant information flow across levels). [Note: we offer the observation that this form of collaborative, leading-from-the-middle, organization engages more people in vibrant ways and could serve as a useful model for the university more generally.]
- B.** Through Phase One activities such as focus groups and interviews we encountered many faculty with a keen interest in the project and the desire for

deeper involvement. Through our PAR approach we have been able not only to integrate their insights into our planning but have invited them to share their expertise through purposeful participation in sub-teams. Three new colleagues have been formally added to the program team through this process: Kristi Lee (College of Education, with expertise in community engagement and broadened definitions of faculty scholarship); Amelia Derr (Department of Social Work, with expertise in research methodology and community outreach); and Jen Tilghman-Havens (Associate Director, Center for Jesuit Education, with expertise in women’s leadership development). These colleagues, as well as the many others serving on the sub-teams, expand our presence across the university considerably as well as enriching the streams of knowledge contributing to the project.

- C. Shortly after we were awarded the ADVANCE grant, both the Provost and the Associate Provost who were included in our initial program management plan left to take new positions. In the past two years SU ADVANCE has received strong support from the Interim Provost, but as he was an interim leader, he recommended direct report to the Associate Provost, who was also very supportive. This past year SU hired a new Provost who brings experience with ADVANCE projects and he has centered SU ADVANCE in his own strategic planning for the university. The external evaluator recommended that with this shift in leadership, we should return to a formal reporting structure to the Provost. We have done so and the PI meets with him monthly.

II –Research Activity – A Feedback-Elaborated Process

Qualitative, community-based research. Our expanded team organization and ongoing strategic engagement in Year Three has led to correspondingly expanded research activities, both formal and informal. As faculty began to learn more about SU ADVANCE we had additional requests to participate in the in-depth interviews. Having completed the 60 interviews as originally proposed, we received IRB approval to conduct up to 120 interviews. To date, the Program and Research Coordinator, Dr. Sarah Trainer, has conducted 76 interviews, averaging 90-120 minutes each. All interviews have been transcribed and we have begun to incorporate information gathered from the interviews into our other activities with the aim of providing evidence-based foundations for the cultural and procedural change work we’re engaged in. The interview information is supported by faculty focus groups, as well as a substantial amount of material gathered through participant observation across multiple and varied university activities, including open forums with administrators, faculty assemblies, governance groups, and events sponsored by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Similarly, Dr. Muraco received IRB approval in February 2019 from Loyola Marymount to begin conducting complementary qualitative research on the LMU campus. To date, Dr. Muraco has completed several interviews, aiming for an N=20 by September 2019. The interview protocols intentionally mirror the protocols we used on the SU campus, to allow us to explore themes across both institutions.

Archival research. Our student intern group, under the supervision of Dr. Sylvester and Dr. Trainer, has compiled and annotated a large online library of ADVANCE-related research, reports and white papers, and public commentaries. The library (run through a Zotero platform) is scheduled to become open to the public at the end of April, coinciding with our campus SU ADVANCE event. Insofar as we know, the library is unique among ADVANCE databases in that it also prioritizes research into community-engaged scholarship and mission-driven institutions.

Faculty Activity Inventory. One of the most significant insights from our research to date, is the need to problematize the concept of “service” as part of a typically three-legged stool that indicates faculty activities (teaching, scholarship, and service). We have come to see “service” as both a misnomer and as a term that may elicit implicit bias in faculty evaluation processes (i.e., women commended for their high levels of “service” may be seen as under-performing in scholarship, regardless of objective measures). As a misnomer, “service” stands in as a default category for the many varied activities faculty participate in but don’t know how to include on their CVs and in evaluation reports. This observation emerged first in our analysis of interviews and took on sharper focus through the focus groups. To achieve more systematic insight, we designed a follow-up study aimed at generating an inventory of faculty activities. Faculty themselves are not oriented toward formal identification of many of the activities that make up their professional work (i.e., they don’t think it counts), but the information can be gathered indirectly through an analysis of their own evaluations of their work. Accordingly, Dr. Trainer and the interns analyzed 40 faculty CVs, sampled from the publically accessible CVs faculty at SU provide on the university website. We then tackled the narrative evaluation statements included in faculty statements for tenure and promotion dossiers. We recruited Amelia Derr, a faculty member with mixed-methods research expertise, to analyze multiple faculty statements, with the aim of generating an inventory of activities. Trainer (after IRB approval) recruited 18 faculty to provide Derr with the statements they wrote when they went up for tenure and/or promotion. Through this research, Derr identified hundreds of unique types of faculty work/activity, which she organized into eight sub-categories (curriculum and academic program development; student mentoring; institutional governance; mission integration; peer mentoring/support; administration; professional service to discipline; community engagement). The subcategories are intended only as general placeholders through which to observe the vast range of activities that constitute faculty careers, many of which are not officially accounted for in faculty evaluation and promotion processes. This activity inventory forms the basis of our Task Force launch (see below) and provides an empirical referent for framing the conversation regarding revised guidelines for what does and doesn’t count.

III – Strategic Engagement and Consulting – Ongoing, Expanding Cultural Knowledge Work

As part of the cultural transformation necessary for effective procedural change, we built into our original project design a multi-faceted plan for “strategic engagement.” The December 2018 Internal Evaluator’s report included a campus-wide faculty survey that

garnered 182 responses (total faculty = 729). Sixty-two percent (N=114) of the respondents reported being aware of SU ADVANCE. We interpret this as positive progress in eliciting general awareness. More importantly, our project requires a critical mass of highly informed faculty and administrators who understand and support the project and can serve as campus-wide ambassadors. To this end, we have intentionally convened various groups, some on multiple occasions, for generating engaged awareness and investment. These groups include:

- A. *Internal Advisory Board (IAB)*.** This group is comprised of a varied group of faculty, deans and other administrators from across the university. The IAB met regularly through Fall 2018 and the agenda prioritized grappling with anticipated challenges and resistance in transforming the academic culture of “what counts” (see 2018 report for fuller description of this group dynamic). Information shared and ideas generated in this group have become a significant influence in shaping our next steps in the process, especially moving toward the Task Force (several of the IAB members now serve on the Task Force). In this way, we have a cumulative, institution-specific, knowledge-generating process that is both informative and transformative: IAB participants have themselves, through the process of critical engagement, become highly articulate and passionate ambassadors for the project. Not all share the same ideas about the ultimate direction of the project, but the diversity of perspectives is especially important in the PAR process.
- B.** In the past year we have been especially intentional about seeking inclusion in university-level activities related to our aims. SU is currently in a Strategic Planning process and Co-PI Dr. Jacoby has been invited to be a liaison from SU ADVANCE to the Strategic Planning Committee. This group has been especially interested in making use of information and insights generated through our research process and (within the confines of IRB and confidentiality). We appreciate this as an opportunity for strategic engagement in an important university process. We also continue to seek opportunities to share conversations with various university leadership groups and have attended meetings with: Academic Assembly, Deans Council, Associate Deans Council, College of Arts and Sciences Faculty Senate, Science and Engineering Executive Committee (department chairs), the AJCU Western Deans Conference, and college-wide faculty meetings in Business, Education, and Arts and Sciences.
- C.** Through PAR, a conversation has emerged about the role of the deans on our IAB and other sub-teams. What we have learned is the necessity of re-framing faculty perceptions of the deans as hierarchically removed evaluators (at best benign, but often perceived as adversarial). As our project takes shape, deans will play a key role in providing not only direct mentoring, but an overall cultural tone within their schools and colleges regarding a more comprehensive understanding of faculty activities. Through their participation on the IAB, the deans have expanded their own thinking and have also shared useful, case-based experiences that deeply inform the project. Accordingly, we are now

working intentionally and strategically to promote collaborative faculty-dean engagement with the aim of cultivating a perception of deans as faculty leaders who serve as formative mentors in helping faculty to discern career trajectories that will best develop their talents to align with a more comprehensive set of professional activities that count. This orientation is much more in line with the overall SU mission of both *cura personalis* and *cura apostolica* and encourages the deans to see their role as assisting faculty in a formative process (see Mentoring). Sub-team work that brings deans and faculty into conversation together for this project is a strategic form of cultivating this re-framing. Intentional inclusion of deans and associate deans on the IAB, Task Force, and Mentoring committee serves to model collaborative, cross-level formational engagement and communication (rather than a top-down evaluative hierarchy).

- D. Across our campus, we are pursuing information sharing with faculty engaged in related programs with the aim of coordinating inter-related efforts. For example, one of our IAB and Task Force members, Dr. Yen-Lin Han (Department of Mechanical Engineering), is a Co-PI on an NSF RED grant. Through this cross-pollination, we learn more about ways in which faculty are doing unique work to enhance student experience and success (and thereby raise the mission-profile of the university) and how we can combine efforts to make this work “count.”

Nationally, we are also taking advantage of opportunities to share about our project with, as well as to learn from, various organizations and associations. Dr. O’Brien and Jen Tilghman-Havens (Associate Director, Center for Jesuit Education) are participating in an 18-month leadership development program for administrators in Jesuit universities. Through this involvement, they have introduced the AJCU network (28 Jesuit universities and colleges) to SU ADVANCE and have generated significant interest which will likely result in upcoming AJCU-wide presentations and subsequent program development on other campuses (we are already receiving informal requests from deans and provosts for information-sharing). Dr. O’Brien was invited to participate in “Beyond ADVANCE” in Oct 2018 and found this working group of former and current ADVANCE program participants especially productive. Dr. Trainer and IAB member, Dr. Nalini Iyer, both attended the NWSA national conference in November 2018; Dr. Trainer spoke on a panel focused on ADVANCE-related institutional issues. Dr. Miguel is a member of the Board of Directors of the American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE) and the Board of Directors of the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department Heads Association (ECEDHA). This past year she participated in national events with both associations and was able to converse with many engineering administrators and faculty members (including many of those who are part of the SU ADVANCE External Consultants Network) and share the status of Seattle University’s ADVANCE grant as well as learn about other ADVANCE projects.

New written products include a forthcoming chapter by Dr. O’Brien in *Presumed Incompetent II* (“Can I Send My Therapy Bill to the University?”), three white

papers, and a campus-wide brief posted on the University Strategic Planning website and the SU ADVANCE website.

- E.** Focused consulting is another way in which we are working strategically to both learn and share. Last year, following input from evaluators and our own experience, we reconfigured our External Advisory Board to an External Advisory Network (EAN), see our 2018 report. The new aim was to seek focused, expert input as needed in various domains of our project. Accordingly, this past year we have benefitted from campus visits with external consultants Dr. Dana Britton (Rutgers), Dr. Martina Ramirez (Loyola Marymount), and Dr. Jessi Smith (University of Colorado, Colorado Springs). We planned Dr. Britton’s visit in fall 2018 to coincide with our transition to Phase Two, specifically to “give us a shot in the arm” as we launched the next big project directions. The two-fold aim of her visit was to have her meet with upper-level administrators for strategic communication about the direction and importance of these next phase activities, and to meet with various team groups to offer experience in our planning. The visit was hugely successful on both counts, Both the President and the Provost remarked on their enthusiasm for the project and their optimism about its potential for large-scale transformation. Dr. Ramirez visited in February as a consulting collaborator to help us in thinking about blueprinting the Mentoring the Mentors program (see Mentoring). As a faculty member (Department of Biology) and Director of Center for Teaching Excellence in a fellow Jesuit university, she is an ideal partner in helping to plan this very significant aspect of the program, especially its long-term sustainability. Dr. Smith, a former ADVANCE PI at Montana State and now Associate Provost in Colorado Springs, has agreed to a consulting visit in May to help us navigate coordination with our Chief Diversity Officer, Strategic Planning, and Academic Assembly as we look ahead to next year’s work of securing faculty governance support for our revised promotion guidelines. The entire External Advisory Network (EAN) participated in a conference Zoom meeting in late November 2018, run by Dr. Miguel and focused on mapping out potential obstacles to institutional change, based on the consultants’ knowledge of other ADVANCE programs. EAN consultants who have offered more specific input this past year include former NSF ADVANCE Officer, Laura Kramer, and Eve Riskin, Associate Dean of Engineering at the University of Washington and a past ADVANCE-Institutional Transformation recipient.

IV – Phase Two Activities – Implementing Across Multiple Knowledge Streams

Phase Two includes two outcome-specific activities: A Task Force on Revising Promotion Guidelines, and a Mentoring the Mentors program. This phase is shaped through the processes and practices of Phase One as well as the information gathered in that phase. In this way, Phase Two is an empirically-grounded, process-tested, PAR feedback-loop informed phase. In the past two years, we have gained substantial insights that nuance our understanding of the ways in which well-researched barriers to advancement affect women and faculty of color on our campus. This nuanced, context-

specific knowledge is foundational in shaping our next phase activities. Through a PAR approach, we have also worked to strategically shape our campus culture to be more receptive to both cultural and procedural changes intended to provide a more equitable accounting of faculty activities that count toward promotion. At the time of this report, we are in the building stages of each of these activities.

A. Task Force for Revising Promotion Guidelines

This university-level task force is composed of faculty and deans from Albers School of Business and Economics, the College of Science and Engineering, the College of Education, the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Nursing. By design, several of the task force members served on the IAB and have thus had two years of intensive grappling with the specific challenges of revising promotion guidelines. Additional new members include faculty who serve on the University Rank and Tenure Committee (URTC) and who thereby have first-hand awareness of the misalignment between traditional research expectations and faculty activities that reflect strong mission integration, enhancement of student experience, and elevation of the institutional profile. The Task Force is chaired by Dr. Kristi Lee, Associate Professor in the College of Education with expertise in faculty assessment and community engagement. Dr. Lee was also a central contributor to the IAB sub-committee research on “multiple paths to promotion” (see link to power-point presentation at <https://www.seattleu.edu/advance/institutional-context/multi-paths-to-promotion-in-institutions-of-higher-education/>).

The Task Force was convened officially in February and has met twice, with additional meetings scheduled for the remainder of the academic year. The group launched with information that summarized research findings from Phase One, including the Faculty Activities Inventory (See Task Force Agendas appendix). In the second meeting, the Task Force considered four general models of promotion guidelines that offer more comprehensive inclusion of faculty activities. These models are derived from the sub-committee research on multiple paths and supporting information. Task Force members have case-specific experience (especially the deans and the URTC members) that provides an empirical referent (rather than just philosophical) for an inductive process of considering revisions that will better reflect the actual careers of faculty we are seeking to encourage and recognize. The Task Force expects to generate revised guidelines this summer and to have them ready to recommend to Academic Assembly, the Deans’ Council, the Associate Deans Council, the University Rank and Tenure Committee (URTC) and the Provost in fall 2019.

B. Mentoring the Mentors

Concurrent to the Task Force, a committee consisting of Dr. Jacoby (Co-PI), Dr. Miller (Associate Director of the Center for Faculty Development), Jen Tilghman-Havens (Associate Director, Center for Jesuit Education), and Dr. Trainer, is working to blueprint an educational mentoring and formation program intended to 1) train deans and other faculty leaders in mentoring faculty for mission-aligned careers, and 2) train faculty evaluators to recognize and support a wide range of faculty activities

that “count” (in alignment with revised promotion guidelines). The committee is proceeding carefully with the intent of building a broad-scale, long-term program that will serve to reflect larger university conversations and transformation around mission alignment. This program recognizes the central role of deans, chairs, and other faculty leaders in shaping both formal and informal practices that broaden perceptions and experiences of how to be a thriving, productive faculty member in a mission-focused university. Successful “mentoring of the mentors” includes critical examination of entrenched cultural ideals about narrowly focused research activities that are presumed to constitute the career of the “full professor,” and, alternatively, cultivating mentors’ deep awareness of the connections between these practices and diversity and inclusion; the wider range of faculty activities (e.g., “service,” community engagement) undertaken by women and faculty of color are more likely to result in promotion when these connections are recognized. In addition to this equity consideration, well-versed mentors come to see that alignment of mission-orientation with faculty development processes and policies results in increased faculty satisfaction, enhanced student experience, and increased university success generally. In short, it’s good for everyone.

We envision a mentoring program that will continue to expand in response to shifts in university strategic planning toward re-centering our mission orientation. To this end, the Mentoring committee is seeking input from outside experts (including a recent consulting visit from Dr. Ramirez) and conducting listening sessions (more strategic engagement) with a wide range of faculty and administrator stakeholders across the university. The mentoring program will be one of the “sustainability” aspects of our project (along with women’s leadership formation). Accordingly, we are approaching the program development with deliberation and care. The timeline is set to correspond with the unfolding of the revised guidelines and the committee is working intentionally to maintain ongoing communication with the Task Force as its work progresses.

V – Looking Ahead

In addition to ongoing efforts in strategic communication as a basis for cultural awareness, our central aims for the coming year include completing the work of the Task Force, continuing development of the Mentoring the Mentors program, launching a related women’s leadership formation program, and focusing on research products. We will also be preparing for our NSF 3rd Year Site Visit scheduled for October 2019.

Most immediately, we’ve planned a campus-wide presentation and reception (“Advance at a Glance”) to update colleagues on our work to date. Recent RSVPs have been received from approximately one fourth of the total faculty. The President and the Provost will be included in this event, to take place on April 23rd. We see this event as an opportunity to share information from our research and establish some strategic “framing points” regarding the reward cultural of academe generally as it aligns with (or doesn’t) the work that faculty actually do and the ways in which women and faculty of color are persistently disadvantaged in this traditional culture.

We expect some faculty to express reservations to our recommended promotion guideline revisions and anticipate challenges in moving these recommendations through the faculty governance process. Some of these expected challenges reflect entrenched, unexamined ideas about what it means to be a full professor; in this respect, we will continue our efforts in raising cultural awareness regarding alternatives. Other challenges are likely to emerge as a result of a faculty governance process that has taken shape in an environment of distrust of university administration in recent years. We are cautiously optimistic that our new Provost is ushering in more inclusive leadership protocols; at the same time, we are mindful of needing to engage continuously and purposefully with faculty colleagues who indicate strong support for the ADVANCE IT project, but who are also cynical about the likelihood of success (the recent Internal Evaluation survey conveys an attitude of some faculty of continuing lack of confidence in positive change).

We are also eager to move forward with written products and have begun to outline several thematic papers organized around general themes of institutional change (i.e., pathways to underlying cultural shifts needed for effective, long-term procedural change) and specific foci regarding traditional cultures of academic as adopted uncritically in mission-focused institutions. In this area, we are especially interested in writing about the ways in which mission-aligned reward structures tap more deeply into the full gifts, talents, and resources of their faculty in ways that have been demonstrated to enhance student success, improve faculty satisfaction, and raise the profile of the university, especially for women and faculty of color. We have also gathered information for our social science research project on faculty resistance to changes that may actually be more beneficial, but which require critical awareness of historically unexamined assumptions about the career path of the full professor.

We are also thinking regularly about the sustainability of our program, which will take shape over time through the institutional formalization of Mentoring the Mentors and a concurrent program in women's leadership formation. This leadership program is overseen by Dr. O'Brien and by team member Jen Tilghman-Havens who has already gathered comparative information on women's leadership programs across a wide range of universities and is networking with administrative leaders in the AJCU to seed this work. We are also taking steps to secure external funding and support and expect this to become a full-scale effort in 2020.