

**“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 FIVE
SEPTEMBER 2020-APRIL 2021**

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Executive Summary

This report covers the period from the end of September 2020 to April 2021. This continues to be a highly unusual time for everyone in higher education because of the COVID-19 pandemic. That said, the SU ADVANCE Program has been able to move forward with our planning.

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

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);
 2. Procedural change in the form of revised promotion guidelines that clearly include mission-related activities as valued and articulate paths toward promotion; and,
 3. 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.
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SU ADVANCE Programmatic Activity Highlights

For the September 2020 to April 2021 time period, our major activities were centered on our two main deliverables, while accommodating COVID-19 related institutional changes.

Activities centered on the revision of our promotion guidelines included:

- (1) A presentation by Drs. Lee, Loertscher, and Taylor (the Task Force Working Group) via Zoom of our latest draft of the "Proposed Revised Guidelines for Promotion to Full Professor" draft to the Academic Assembly on November 2, 2020.
- (2) More listening sessions to gather feedback on the guidelines draft from SU faculty. These included a listening session with SU ADVANCE team members involved in faculty formation and mentoring (especially Angelique Davis and Holly Ferraro), SU legal counsel, the Dean's Council, and the University Rank & Tenure Committee.
- (3) An "Open Forum" on January 14, 2021 to gather a final round of feedback on the revised guidelines from the SU community. The Working Group facilitated this session.
- (4) Further integration of feedback into the revised promotion guidelines draft by Drs. Lee, Loertscher, and Taylor, followed by submission of the guidelines draft to the Seattle University Faculty Handbook Revision Committee at the end of January 2021.
- (5) A cooperative engagement with the Faculty Handbook Revision Committee throughout the month of February that resulted in the Committee recommending that our "Proposed Revised Guidelines for Promotion to Full Professor" draft be approved by the Seattle University Academic Assembly. The Academic Assembly met March 8, 2021 and approved the Committee's motion, which means that the "Proposed Revised Guidelines for Promotion to Full Professor" has passed a major milestone in our internal university faculty governance processes.

Activities centered on cultural and structural change through mentoring and faculty development included:

- (1) Co-sponsorship of a 3-day workshop series in October-November 2020 with the Center for Faculty Development, facilitated by Kristi Lee and Jen Tilghman Havens, titled

"Beyond the Impact Factor." A group of faculty attended this series to learn about how to reframe mission-resonant research to align with their interests but also to be more clearly "counted."

- (2) A six-session workshop series for associate professors who identify as faculty of color and who are experiencing challenges in their trajectory towards promotion. This workshop series began on December 10, 2020 and has met three times since then. Team member, Angelique Davis, is facilitating this series.
- (3) The launch of the mentoring series for deans and associate deans, designed to help them think about mentoring in more inclusive ways that are mission aligned and fit with the revised promotion guidelines. The first session was held on February 25, 2021 and was attended by six deans and ten associate deans. Drs. O'Brien and Jacoby facilitated. Two more sessions have been planned for April and May 2021.

Other activities during this time period included:

- (1) Continued work by Dr. Trainer to adapt our social science research to the new realities of COVID-19, still in line with our Participatory Action Research (PAR) model. Faculty were invited to send written reflections to Dr. Trainer about the effects that the move to online education and the shut-downs have had on them personally and professionally.
- (2) Continued work by Drs. Sylvester and Trainer, Reine Mages, and the undergraduate interns to refine the website and online library.
- (3) Work by Drs. Sylvester and Trainer to make faculty data more accessible and available to the community. Data "snapshots" on faculty demographics and rank can now be found on the SU ADVANCE website.
- (4) Increased communication with the larger community via remote tools, including the publication of three SU ADVANCE Newsletters over the last nine months. The newsletters were emailed to all members of the SU community, as well as our External Consultants. Both newsletters are available on the website.
- (5) Continued work on our dissemination plan centered on the writing and production of different kinds of publications (conference papers, op-eds, journal articles, etc.). Trainer and team member, Agnieszka Miguel, presented a paper focused on the COVID-19 research at the CoNECD engineering conference in January 2021. Trainer, O'Brien, and team member, Annamarie Muraco, presented a paper focused on the social science research at the PSA sociology conference in late March 2021.

The Broader Context

Seattle University has had numerous conversations over the course of the last year and a half on what it means (in the words of Provost Martin) to "re-envision the professoriate for the 21st century." In other words, at a time when wide-ranging conversations are taking place across and within American institutions of higher education about demonstrated problems affecting the academy, we at SU ADVANCE are attempting to (1) more clearly align our educational mission of academic excellence and community engagement with our faculty reward structures, and (2) provide more systematic and equity-oriented mentoring and support for

faculty engaged in diverse types of scholarly work and leadership activities that together, contribute to our academic excellence and our relevance as an institution.

As noted in a recent report by the National Academies of Science, Engineering & Medicine, titled, "The Impact of COVID-19 on the Careers of Women in Academic Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine," the crises precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic make these concerns more important. Faculty at all types of institutions of higher education are experiencing documented struggles with balancing personal and professional demands of all kinds.

Our specific objectives at SU ADVANCE are (1) revising our promotion guidelines to full professor to allow for a more inclusive vision of "what a full professor at Seattle University is and does" (quoting a team member) and (2) systemic cultural change through programs like our "Leadership Development Institute" that will mentor, sponsor, and provide leadership training to faculty. Because research shows that vague policies, in combination with narrowly defined cultural notions of "what a full professor looks like" (quoting another team member), differentially impact women faculty and faculty of color, there are significant ramifications to these proposed changes from an equity, inclusion, and diversity perspective. Again, the challenges besetting our institution make our work even more critical.

Finally, we aim to ensure that our institutional transformation efforts, as well as our responses to evaluations and feedback, are rooted in data from our ongoing PAR. A hallmark of SU ADVANCE is our 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.

Programmatic Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic

SU ADVANCE is uniquely positioned to think strategically and systematically about the implications of the profound shifts in faculty work caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and its differential impacts on diverse faculty in terms of workload, tenure and promotion, salaries, teaching evaluations, etc. In addition, our PAR model, which emphasizes ongoing, multi-level feedback, allows our program to respond to the current challenges that faculty are facing. Seattle University itself is faced with fundamental changes across its teaching, research, and service commitments because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the pressures necessitated by the shift to remote instruction and work, and financial concerns. SU ADVANCE will need to be responsive to these changes – and is positioned well to be responsive.

Over the reporting period covered in this report, our established practices have enabled us to step in and serve the university as it has grappled with the implications of the pandemic. Specifically, we have broadened our scope of impact to include:

- (1) Invited attendance of our PI (O'Brien) and Co-PI (Jacoby) at most upper administrative meetings this quarter, including University Strategic Planning, Deans' Council, and University Rank & Tenure, to "provide the ADVANCE perspective" to SU administration.

- (2) Invited attendance of our Research Coordinator (Trainer) at the "COVID-19 Faculty Accommodations Committee" meetings throughout Winter Quarter 2021, to provide data to support decision-making.
- (3) Invited input from our PI (O'Brien) on initiatives to temporarily revise tenure and evaluation processes, as well as annual performance reviews, to recognize the challenges to faculty during the pandemic.

Our focus over the next reporting period will be on intense work to build our "Leadership Development Institute," continued social science research, and continued communication with our communities. All mentoring, training, networking, research, and support opportunities for the foreseeable future will necessarily have to accommodate the move to remote instruction and the increased challenges that faculty face as a result of COVID-19 related changes. We are confident that our PAR model and our emphasis on data-driven changes will help us accommodate these necessary changes and delays.