

SUMMATIVE 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) is completing its NSF-funded ADVANCE-IT grant, “What Counts as Success? Recognizing and Rewarding Women Faculty’s Differential Contributions in a Comprehensive Liberal Arts University.” The project sought to achieve institutional, cultural, and structural transformation that brought promotion standards, perceived expectations, and mentoring processes fully into line with the values-based educational mission of the university.

The three project aims were to achieve 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 changes 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.

This report covers the grant period, from September 2016 (award date) through May 2022, which includes the five funded grant years and one no-cost extension.

KEY IMPACTS:

- The Board of Trustees adopted revisions to Seattle University’s promotion guidelines in June 2021, marking the fulfillment of SU ADVANCE’s goal to broaden the definition of scholarship and recognize university leadership and institution building activities in the promotion process.
- SU ADVANCE generated widespread buy-in for the guideline revisions through utilization of the Participatory Action Research (PAR) model, strategic communication practices, and strong relationships with faculty and administrators across campus.
- Seattle University codified a commitment to professional development and mentoring for mid-career faculty through the establishment of Holistic Faculty Development Plans (HFDP).
- Deans and associate deans valued the inclusive mentoring workshops that SU ADVANCE convened and were eager to take part in further training.
- Stakeholders perceived a cultural shift at SU around the range of faculty work that the university values, marked by acknowledgement that the revised promotion guidelines are well aligned with the university’s mission.
- In interviews with the external evaluator, faculty reported that changes to promotion criteria increased their job satisfaction and enthusiasm about their careers.
- Associate professors who participated in workshops about how to prepare promotion packets under the new guidelines indicated that the information was extremely useful and

that the sessions made them feel more motivated and confident about going up for full professor.

- The number of faculty going up for promotion to full professor increased in 2020-2021, a majority of whom were women and faculty of color. People who spoke with the external evaluation team expressed optimism that the revised guidelines would lead to more faculty from marginalized groups going up for full professor in the future, as well.

SUSTAINABILITY:

- The revised promotion guidelines became a lasting change to the faculty handbook with the final adoption by the Board of Trustees in summer 2021. Next, college-level guidelines will be updated to reflect the university-level guidelines and faculty seeking promotion to full will be expected to produce evidence of a multi-year HFDP beginning in 2024.
- Among the university's Strategic Directions for 2022-2027 is a stated commitment to institutionalizing ADVANCE, clear evidence that the central tenets of the grant will be sustained beyond the grant period.
- PI Dr. Jodi O'Brien was appointed to the role of special assistant to the provost for faculty development and will oversee the implementation of Holistic Faculty Development Plans and related mentoring initiatives, as well as on-going training for department chairs, deans, and evaluation committees at the college and university levels.
- The Center for Faculty Development, in collaboration with the Provost's Office, will continue to lead workshops on the expanded pathways to promotion and holistic faculty mentoring.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To ensure that grant impacts are enhanced and sustained, Seattle University should address the following recommendations:

Strengthening Processes, Knowledge, and Structures for Sustainability

- Support fidelity of the new promotion guidelines, maintain focus on training faculty and administrators on holistic faculty mentoring and HFDPs and support colleges as they align their own promotion guidelines with the revised university-wide guidelines. In doing so, enhance training for administrators on intersectionality and how biases faced by faculty from marginalized groups may affect their career development and evaluation under the new guidelines.
- Ensure that SU ADVANCE faculty leaders, who will serve the vital role of representing each of the colleges and work in coordination with the provost's office, are trained in alignment with the SU ADVANCE leadership and institutionalization plan.
- Continue efforts to develop processes for accessing and utilizing institutional data on a regular basis to guide university efforts to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion for marginalized groups. Ensure data on promotion, hires, attrition, and faculty composition

are available to decision-makers and establish accountability to address any inequities that are reflected in the data.

- Dedicate effort to coordinate and align these provost-office initiatives with university-wide planning and programming around diversity and inclusion, specifically (but not exclusively) in terms of supporting faculty from marginalized groups in the promotion process.

Dissemination

- Continue to disseminate the rigorous research findings and best practices to institutions seeking similar objectives, including the other Jesuit colleges and universities.
- Consider ways to maintain or archive the SU ADVANCE website and online library beyond the grant period, as both are important resources that could benefit other institutions seeking to implement structural changes.

Building on Success

- Leverage the success of SU ADVANCE to support diversity, equity, and inclusion for other marginalized groups, with a focus on intersectionality.
- Proceed with plans to collaborate with other institutions, including Jesuit institutional partners, to expand the foundation for maximizing broad cultural changes in mission-based institutions that support faculty advancement for women and other marginalized groups.

SU ADVANCE achieved its central goal of bringing promotion standards and mentoring processes fully into line with the educational mission of the university. The grant successfully built widespread buy-in for revisions to the promotion process and implementation of mentoring for mid-career faculty, both of which will be sustained beyond the grant period. With continued support for ongoing efforts initiated by the grant, the cultural shifts that accompanied the revised promotion guidelines are likely to be sustained. Ongoing dissemination of research findings and best practices can provide a successful model for other institutions seeking institutional transformation.

While much has been achieved, Seattle University cannot be complacent; it is essential for the institution to continue to support efforts and measures of accountability. Maintaining the forward momentum of the grant's objectives will require ongoing resources and oversight. Continuing to share and disseminate the resulting research, best practices, and resources developed by SU ADVANCE will affirm Seattle University's leadership among successful institutional change efforts and provide a robust model for other institutions to follow.