

**YEAR 5 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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Submitted By:  
Mariko Chang Consulting, Inc.  
Mariko Chang, PhD  
Sadie Davis, MPP  
[www.mariko-chang.com](http://www.mariko-chang.com)

## Executive Summary

Seattle University (SU) is in the fifth year of their 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:

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;
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 external evaluation report covers the period of March 2020 through June 2021, which includes parts of the fourth and fifth years of the grant but for simplicity will be referred to as “Year 5.” Drawing upon both quantitative and qualitative data, this report highlights progress toward grant goals and offers recommendations to facilitate long-term impacts.

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### Significant Impacts:

- SU ADVANCE’s communication and engagement efforts have initiated a cultural transformation at SU to align promotion processes with the mission of the university.
- The grant team’s use of the Participatory Action Research (PAR) model raised awareness of issues in counting faculty activities, generated buy-in for proposed changes to promotion guidelines, and engendered trust in SU ADVANCE.
- The Board of Trustees adopted the revised promotion guidelines in June 2021.
- Robust grant research has expanded to address impacts of COVID-19 on SU faculty.
- Although not a central goal of SU ADVANCE, stakeholders indicate that changes to the guidelines for promotion may result in subsequent changes to promotion and evaluation criteria for non-tenure-track faculty.
- SU ADVANCE is engaged in conversations with the Provost’s Office about planning for institutionalization.

### Areas of Opportunity:

- Undeveloped institutional capacity and infrastructure for faculty-level data for key demographics and faculty processes (for example, promotion)
- Ensuring any changes in university-level promotion guidelines are reflected in unit-level guidelines and implemented effectively with guidance and oversight
- Enhancing a collaborative working relationship with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion
- Uncertainty due to budget challenges and changes at the top level of administration

## **Key Recommendations:**

### *Data and Assessment*

- Continue to work with the Office of Institutional Research and Office of the Provost to establish guidelines and a robust infrastructure for institutional data collection, analysis, and dissemination. University-level investments in infrastructure and efforts to improve the collection of faculty demographic data will support these efforts.

### *Collaboration*

- Create a memorandum of understanding outlining opportunities for collaboration between ODI and SU ADVANCE, scope of work for the Faculty Fellow, plans for engagement, and communication processes.

### *Social Science Research*

- Consider how research findings related to the impacts of the COVID pandemic can be used to support SU ADVANCE goals, such as incorporating feedback into future trainings for leaders on how they can support faculty toward promotion.

### *Intersectionality*

- Continue to address intersectionality in grant-related programming, research, and communication.

### *Dissemination*

- Develop a deliberate and robust external dissemination plan. Consider relevant audiences in relation to current grant goals and future opportunities (for example, an NSF ADVANCE Partnership grant, extension of work to LMU, dissemination through AJCU, continued publications and presentations).

### *Sustainability and Institutionalization*

- Continue successful engagement with the Office of the Provost and enlist support of the incoming President to finalize plans for institutionalization. Plans should include ways to oversee and support revisions of unit-level guidelines in alignment with university-level guidelines, implementation of HFDPs, and continued mentoring of administrators and faculty to meet these new guidelines.

With the passage of the revised guidelines for promotion, SU ADVANCE is well positioned to realize its objectives. As the team looks toward the sustainability of central initiatives, they should work closely with the Provost's Office and key partners to plan for the institutionalization of training workshops for deans, associate deans, and department chairs. The grant team should also aim to broadly disseminate information about its accomplishments, as SU ADVANCE has the potential to serve as a model for other institutions seeking to achieve institutional transformation.