



Report of the Faculty Development Committee – Part IV

Committee members:

Professor Mary Jo Ondrechen, Chair

Professor Susan Asai

Professor Rebecca Carrier

Professor Vanessa Johnson

Professor John Portz

March 29, 2016

On October 22, 2015, we received the following charge from the Senate Agenda Committee: “The Committee shall review the results from ADVANCE and evaluate its effectiveness in promoting diversity within the University faculty.”

To answer this charge, we reviewed the final report of the ADVANCE project and individual Committee members also contributed their personal experiences with ADVANCE activities. We also looked at the ADVANCE “Faculty Dashboard 2015-2016” dated December 1, 2015.

We note that two of the goals of the ADVANCE project were to: 1) Increase the representation of women on the faculty in the science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and social science fields to more than 30%; and 2) Increase the number of women of color on the faculty to >18.

Comparing faculty demographics from the pre-ADVANCE year 2007-08 to the year at the end of ADVANCE, 2014-15, the percentage of women on the faculty in the target disciplines rose from 21% to 26%, while the percentage rose from 30% to 33% across all disciplines at NU. Thus there was improvement in the number of women on the faculty in the target disciplines, although the goal of 30% representation was not met. Furthermore, we see no evidence of significant increase in the numbers of underrepresented minority faculty. In fact, the Faculty Dashboard shows that the percentages of underrepresented minority faculty remained disappointingly flat over the project years.

We find that ADVANCE did very well with the aspects of University life where it had the authority and resources to act. The STRIDE workshops have had significant impact on awareness of, and reduction of, implicit bias in faculty searches. The Future Faculty Fellowship program for postdoctoral scholars has had a direct impact in that it has provided a pathway to a tenure-track position at NU for early-career women and minorities. To date, two Fellows have accepted tenure-track positions at NU. So, although ADVANCE had no direct control over faculty hiring decisions, ADVANCE was able to institute processes that actually helped faculty diversity, albeit for a relatively small number of cases.

The numbers of tenured women in the target fields, as well as the numbers of women full professors, has grown. It is likely that the ADVANCE workshops, networks, and other support systems, have contributed meaningfully to this improvement.

The underrepresentation of women on the faculty, particularly in the STEM fields, remains a serious problem. The very small numbers of underrepresented minority faculty, particularly in the STEM fields, is an even more acute problem and there has been little progress to address it.

We believe that it is unrealistic to expect one program like ADVANCE to solve these long-standing problems in faculty diversity. It will take a much bigger effort, involving administrative commitment, to make significant progress in these areas. For instance, the University could institute a Target of Opportunity faculty hiring program with a diversity initiative. The Future Faculty Fellowship program should be evaluated to find mechanisms to increase the applicant pool. Funding for the program could be increased. The University could make a commitment to have a more visible presence at minority academic professional societies.

While the University's support for, and institutionalization of, ADVANCE is laudable, much more needs to be done.