

**September 14, 2004**

**Subject: ADVANCE site visit recommendations**

Dear Sue,

As discussed, I am attaching the recommendations of the site visit team concerning the UC Irvine ADVANCE Institutional Transformation project, and the summary site visit report.

While you may wish to consider the recommendations of the site visit team with respect to management and other issues, the following set of recommendations on evaluation, assessment and dissemination must be addressed with commitments to a specific set of actions and a specific timetable for completing them. Please provide NSF with a plan by October 15 that addresses the concerns outlined below. Please note that no additional funds beyond the original funding commitment will be made available to implement evaluation activities; if existing funds are insufficient, please propose a rebudgeting that provides adequate funding for evaluation and dissemination. Assuming successful resolution of these concerns, NSF is prepared to restore funds that were withheld from the fourth year funding allocation.

For advice on development and implementation of an appropriate evaluation approach, I recommend that you consult with professionals in that field.

I look forward to working with you to ensure the successful implementation of institutional transformation at the University of California at Irvine. Please let me know if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Alice Hogan

**Assessment/Evaluation/Dissemination**

The project should institute a formal, systematic internal evaluation that collects reviews and interprets data relevant to each main project intervention. Elements of the interview and survey data collection that are already in place should be tailored to the specific activities of the project and be used to inform decision about project implementation. The project should also contract with an outside evaluator to conduct an external evaluation that is coordinated with the internal evaluation. This evaluation should include an external review and analysis of quantitative data collected for the NSF indicators and not be limited to a brief site visit.

A more comprehensive dissemination plan is needed that includes such

things as dissemination of products and activities to other institutions nationally through conference presentations, papers, and packaging of relevant project products (e.g. the forms and training materials prepared for SPPs). The current component (website) needs documentation of visits to the website including the number of visits (unique computers/day) and which portions of the website are visited.

Discussion (from the site visit report)

There is no formal internal assessment process in place. The Project Director reported that she, the PI and the co-PI discuss the progress of the project periodically, but they do not follow a systematic procedure for reviewing data for the purpose of program improvement. Neither is a formal external assessment in place. The Project Director reported that an external panel was scheduled to do a site visit this summer that was canceled because of the NSF ADVANCE site visit.

The project collects three types of data potentially relevant to assessment: institutional and school-level indicator data (per the "NSF 12"), gender equity climate data (surveys of faculty and chairs), and qualitative gender equity climate data (interviews). The indicator data are loosely used to gauge progress toward meeting the ultimate goal of advancing females in academia at UCI (e.g., "We're making progress in recruiting women"), but they are not used (nor were they intended) to reflect the effectiveness of specific project components. A detailed survey report has been generated based on the first wave of data collection and findings are summarized in the annual report. The survey team (internal consultants) reported that these data are intended to measure climate changes over the course of the project.

Some items on ADVANCE activities were reportedly included in the second wave of data collection, but survey data have thus far not been used for program evaluation. The qualitative interviews collected by another internal consultant were intended to provide in-depth climate data from the perspective of full-time female faculty. Interview findings were reported (albeit briefly) and some recommendations were included for UCI (April 2004). The project does not appear to consider these data relevant to internal evaluation.

Overall, the SVT noted a pronounced lack of attention to assessment. As noted above, data collections mechanisms are in place and some potentially relevant data may be available, but they have not yet been used to inform project operations or strategies. Systematic assessment of ADVANCE component activities on an ongoing basis was not in evidence.

Dissemination

The only type of dissemination discussed during the site visit was the ADVANCE website. This was the mechanism used for both internal and external dissemination. The SVT does not consider the existence of a

website an adequate dissemination plan. In addition, there was inadequate documentation of visits to the website.