Virginia Commonwealth University

ADVANCE-IT

Evaluation and Communication Plans
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Evaluation Plan

This Evaluation Plan features

- the Project Evaluation detailed in the approved proposal and
- the Report on Progress-to-Date.

Project Evaluation

The VCU Project Evaluation, as stated in the approved proposal, includes the following information:

- **Implementation**: Did the project proceed as planned? What accounts for deviation from the plan? How congruent is Immunity to Change (ITC) theory with practice? What are participant and stakeholder reactions to and knowledge about project activities? What adjustments are made as a function of formative evaluation?

- **Process**: How are project participants and other stakeholders reacting to initiatives? Are they receiving the information they need about the project? What do participants think of ITC as a concept and as a process? In what ways do participants intend to change as a result of going through ITC? What barriers have they encountered? What have participants and stakeholders gained from being a part of the project (internal and external gains)? What aspects of change have been easy to implement and what aspects have been hard to implement? Who is taking advantage of the programs, funding, and stipends?

- **Outcomes**: What changes in beliefs, attitudes, or behavior can be attributed to project initiatives? How successful has the project been in diagnosing and reducing the power of competing commitments? What are the unanticipated findings, and what is to be learned from these? What are the catalytic effects, that is, other institutional changes stimulated by the project? What changes have occurred on the university level, department level, and unit level that can be attributed to the program?

- **Impact**: What evidence exists of permanent, transformative change at VCU, brought about directly or indirectly by the ADVANCE-IT grant? What has been learned about ITC that is beneficial to other ADVANCE-IT projects, and to institutions of higher education more generally?

Formative evaluation, providing information useful for mid-course correction, encompasses the implementation, process, and outcome levels; summative evaluation is at the impact level. The evaluation questions will guide the data collection using a mixed methods approach from multiple sources, as shown in Table 1, thus strengthening the credibility of findings through triangulation. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval will be sought for all evaluation efforts.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Sources of Data</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did the project proceed as planned?</td>
<td>Project timelines, meeting minutes, process observation of programs (1-5)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What is the congruence between ITC theory and practice?</td>
<td>Minutes, interviews with ADVANCE-IT VCU team, web-based surveys with participants and other stakeholders (1-5)</td>
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<td>What accounts for deviation from the plan?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What are participant and stakeholder reactions to and knowledge about project activities?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What adjustments are made as a function of formative evaluation data?</td>
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<td>Implementation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>How are participants and other stakeholders reacting to project activities?</td>
<td>Satisfaction, knowledge gained, and feelings/beliefs web-based surveys for participants in all project activities, surveys, and focus groups of STEM departments (1-5)</td>
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<td>Are they receiving the information they need about the project?</td>
<td>Initial focus groups with ITC participants, department chairs, and Council of Chairs. Web-based surveys of ITC participants, including their action plans; web-based with department chairs about plans regarding Council of Chairs and plans to revise leadership styles (1-5)</td>
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<td>In what ways do participants intend to change?</td>
<td>Attendance records and pre-post surveys of programs (1-5)</td>
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<td>What barriers have they encountered?</td>
<td>Web-based surveys and interviews with mentors and mentees (2-5)</td>
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<td>What have participants and stakeholders gained from being a part of the project (internal and external gains)?</td>
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<td>What aspects of change have been easy to implement and what aspects have been hard to implement?</td>
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<td>Who is taking advantage of the programs, funding, and stipends?</td>
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<td>Process</td>
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Table 1: Evaluation Levels, Key Questions, and Sources of Data
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<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Sources of Data (Year(s) Collected)</th>
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</table>
| Outcomes | What changes in beliefs, attitudes, or behavior can be attributed to project initiatives?  
How successful has the project been in reducing the power of competing commitments?  
What are the unanticipated findings, and what is to be learned from these?  
What are the catalytic effects?  
What changes have occurred on the university level, department level, and unit level that can be attributed to the program? | Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) survey (Pre-1,4)  
Follow-up survey of ITC participants regarding implementation of changes (1,3,5)  
Follow-up interviews with chairs (3,5)  
Web-based surveys of STEM women regarding career/life integration, attitudes towards promotion and tenure (1,3,5)  
Web-based surveys of STEM department personnel (1,3,5)  
Interviews with VCU leaders and review of university reports and news stories (5) |
| Impact | What evidence exists of permanent, transformative change at VCU, brought about directly or indirectly by the ADVANCE-IT grant?  
What has been learned about ITC? | Pre-post comparisons of statistics on hiring, retention, and promotion of STEM women/underrepresented minorities (pre-1,5)  
University climate survey (Pre-1,4)  
Changes in University policies in desired directions (5)  
Project reports, publications (5, post-5)  
Focus groups and interviews with key stakeholders (5) |

**Personnel:** Dr. Mary Moore and Dr. Jennifer Reid, Senior Research Associates at VCU’s Survey and Evaluation Research Laboratory (SERL), were identified to lead the internal evaluation, and Dr. KerryAnn O’Meara (University of Maryland) was identified as our external evaluator.

**Report on Progress-to-Date**

At this time, there are no substantive changes to the evaluation plan. Rather, the internal and external evaluators are working on creating a micro-map of all the goals and initiatives outlined overall and by each work-group in VCU’s ADVANCE-IT plan and linking them to sources of data and expected pre-post change. While the original evaluation plan was on a macro-level, this micro-map will help the project team refine their goals and focus more precisely on strategies for measuring impact. Through this process, the evaluation team...
will identify all evaluation opportunities to ensure that all ecological and individual indicators related to the change produced (impact) by the initiatives are captured.

To date, the internal evaluators and external evaluator have taken the following steps:

- The evaluation team met and began working independently and together on outlining overall VCU ADVANCE-IT, as well as work-team goals, activities, sources of data, and benchmarks.
- The evaluation team reviewed secondary data that can be integrated into starting benchmark statistics.
- The evaluation team developed an evaluation timeline that corresponds with the implementation plan for the initiatives.
- Internal evaluators have met with Project Leadership to discuss the process to access starting benchmark statistics, to plan for the campus climate survey, and to agree on a process by which participation information will be collected and kept.
- Internal evaluators have attended all meetings with the Project Leadership team in order to fully understand the process and timelines associated with the project as it gets off of the ground.
- The external evaluator has met with the internal evaluators to work on the map discussed, make recommendations on data sources, and provide examples from other ADVANCE-IT projects.
- The internal and external evaluators are working with the Project Leadership team to develop innovative audit tools to assess the presence, strength, and variation in specific barriers to change and competing commitments operating at present as a benchmark for change.
- The external evaluator made plans with VCU ADVANCE-IT Leadership team related to how she will spend time budgeted on the grant for year one (e.g., 6 days); she worked with the Leadership team to begin planning for the campus visit and year one evaluation report.

## Communication Plan

To advance the dissemination of best change practices and research findings, we will share the materials at three discrete yet integrated levels:

- VCU
- The Commonwealth of Virginia, including the Virginia Network (the regional women’s network of the American Council of Education’s Inclusive Excellence Group)
- The national community of STEM administrators and faculty, especially ADVANCE-IT institutions.

We will create and deliver materials to each of these audiences in multiple media, including workshops that offer training to faculty, administrators, and other relevant personnel in STEM disciplines; written guidelines that provide information on how to initiate demonstrated best practices; and a dedicated website, ADVANCE-IT VCU, that will serve as a permanent resource. The professional development materials we develop will be offered electronically via the Grace E. Harris Leadership Institute (GEHLI) and VCU ADVANCE-IT websites. In addition, we will coordinate symposia at our professional associations such as the American Society for Engineering Education; the American Association for the Advancement of Science; and the Virginia Academy
Taking advantage of our location in the state capital, and our relationship with the Virginia legislature through VCU’s Office of Government Relations, we will hold an annual press conference to share accomplishments and findings. We will also brief Virginia legislators, members of the State Council of Higher Education, and the Secretary of Education. The goal is to educate policy makers and garner their support for similar policies in all Virginia institutions of higher education.

Additionally, to disseminate findings we will draw on a strong network of STEM women in leadership positions at sister institutions in Virginia. Included in this group are deans and associate deans of engineering and sciences, presidents of professional societies and members of National Academies. In the final year of the grant, VCU will offer a 2-day workshop on best practices, simulcast online (allowing national/international participation), and targeting academic leaders at colleges and universities with similar profiles. Of course, we will share information via the ADVANCE Implementation Mentors (AIM) network, the ADVANCE Portal, ADVANCE listserv, and at ADVANCE PI meetings.

Members of our interdisciplinary team will publicize the findings and policy recommendations through traditional means such as conference presentations and peer-reviewed journal articles. For example, publications such as the Association for Women in Science Journal (AWIS), Journal of Women and Minorities in Science and Engineering, Journal of Higher Education, Inside Higher Education, Change: the Magazine of Higher Learning, Women in Higher Education, Academe, Review of Higher Education, Chronicle of Higher Education, and Journal of Diversity in Higher Education will all be appropriate venues.

Additionally, we will utilize various social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Storify, and Medium to chronicle our progress, discuss and disseminate our findings, and connect our work with others. After any necessary publisher embargo period, we will deposit our publications/data in VCU Scholars Compass, the institutional repository for Virginia Commonwealth University, used to host, share and disseminate the intellectual output of VCU’s academic and research communities to a global audience.