NSF ADVANCE

First Year Site Visit Report

IT Grantee institution: University of Houston

Site Visit Date: October 29, 2014

Grant Number: 1409928

Project Director or Contact: Holly Hutchins, lead co-PI

NSF Participants: Beth Mitchneck

Report prepared by: Beth Mitchneck

Pre-visit notes (concerns, risk factors, etc. if applicable): Management structure

Site Visit Notes:

Program Management

Appraisal or Accomplishments:

The majority of the initiative teams has been established and the teams are beginning to meet. I met with the Diversity and Inclusion team and found a high level of engagement and enthusiasm for the ADVANCE project. The Recruitment and Retention group has not been convened.

The co-PI team is highly engaged and enthusiastic. The PI is supportive.

Recommendations:

I recommend that the Recruitment and Retention group be established as soon as possible. I also recommend that each team be given a concrete and specific charge from the PI team that is then discussed. Great clarity in the expectations of the work from each team is needed.

I also recommend that the PI team be structured so that each PI has a specific and concrete role to carry out in the project. I find a significant contradiction in the program management structure...
because the Provost has no formal role with the grant yet she is also responsible for carrying the activities as director of the center charged with implementation.

I find another contradiction that the incoming project director reports to the provost – who has no formal role with the grant – yet the lead co-PI and all other PIs have no reporting relationship to the project director. I think that these contradictions are likely to produce problems down the road with project implementation. I recommend that a clearer set of reporting relationships and management roles be elaborated as soon as possible.

**Campus Leadership**

**Appraisal:**

It is clear that campus leadership is highly engaged and support of the ADVANCE program. Because I did not meet with the dean of business/management, I cannot assess the commitment from that college.

**Recommendations:**

I recommend that the ADVANCE team and provost engage fully with the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences to provide support for participation with the ADVANCE project.

**Faculty Involvement**

**Appraisal or Accomplishments:**

The team structure is an excellent way to gain faculty buy in and to embed the program in the STEM disciplines around campus.

**Recommendations:**

Add faculty members to the initiative teams. These faculty members should include full professors (the teams are light on full professors) and the teams must include social and behavioral sciences. NSF defines STEM to include social and behavioral sciences (SBS) and thus we require the inclusion of SBS in ADVANCE Institutional Transformation projects. Often the theoretical and empirical knowledge necessary for developing and implementing the projects (without recreating the wheel) are known to faculty in many SBS departments and research also shows that the issues around the advancement of women in STEM are startling similar in SBS departments as to other STEM ones. I recommend the immediate inclusion of SBS faculty on the teams.

The Inclusion and Diversity team has capacity in the area of student diversity, but not in the area of faculty diversity or institutional change. I recommend the inclusion of faculty members on your campus who know the literature on gender
and on organizational or institutional change. There is a large literature that will help your program shape the activities to be most successful on your campus. In addition, because this team may be a little delayed in getting the materials ready for this search season, you may consider bringing in someone from the outside ADVANCE community to do some search committee orientations from which you could build your own. The consultant approach has been used effectively by other ADVANCE institutions. My caution here is that it may best on your campus to utilize home grown expertise – you all are the best judges of that.

Facilities

Appraisal:

The Provost has allocated the project excellent and highly visible space that will be occupied only by members of the ADVANCE project.

Recommendations:

Make sure that meeting space is available and that meetings for the project are held around campus to increase accessibility and visibility to faculty who are resident around campus.
Steering/Advisory Committee

Appraisal:
The committee is appropriately composed and highly engaged with the project. We had a clear conversation about the roles of this committee and ways to show engagement with the project.

Recommendations:
I recommend that this committee meet at least every semester and that all materials including internal and external evaluation reports and all reports submitted to NSF be provided to this team for input.

Other Observations

Appraisal or Accomplishments:
The project management team is coming out in force! This means that this too is a very engaged group.

Recommendations:
The project management team may be too large to handle the day-to-day (or month to month) operations of the project. I recommend that communication mechanisms be put in place so each team knows what the other teams are doing without having to attend those meetings. Some possibilities include a newsletter or monthly updates that the chairs of the teams circulate to this group.

The internal and external advisory boards are well staffed. I suggest considering appointment and reappointment to these boards – and possible the initiative teams. As the project evolves, you may find that the needs of the program vary and the composition of the boards may need to vary along with changes in program direction.

Overall Assessment
The ADVANCE project is in excellent hands with lots of expertise, particularly from Holly Hutchins, and tremendous enthusiasm. The ARN is an especially novel part of the project, there are others too of course!

Follow-up:

Separate Response from Grantee Required
A restructured management structure with clearly articulated project roles must be submitted with the December 1 mid-term report.

Updates Required in Annual Report
An update on project management and initiative team composition.
**Attachments:**
Site Visit Agenda with names of people involved
Related Correspondence with Grantee
Center for ADVANCING UH Faculty Success

National Science Foundation First Year Site Visit

October 29, 2014

Agenda

Welcoming: NSF Program Manager: Dr. Beth Mitchneck
Time: 8:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

7:00–7:45 a.m.  Breakfast with lead Co-PI, interim managing director
    Eric’s Restaurant  Dr. Holly Hutchins, Lisa Robertson

8:00–8:40 a.m.  Meeting Diversity & Inclusion working team
    Engineering Dean’s Conference Room, 421

8:45–10:00 a.m.  Meeting with UH ADVANCE Co-PI team
    Engineering Dean’s Conference Room, 421

10:15–11:30 a.m.  Meeting with Project Management Team
    Technology Dean’s Conference Room, 323

11:45 a.m.–1:30 p.m.  Working lunch with Internal Advisory Committee
    Fred Parks Conference Room  Hosted by Provost Short

1:45–2:00 p.m.  Tour of ADVANCE space with lead Co-PI
    203 E. Cullen

2:15–3:00 p.m.  Meeting with Dr. Paula Myrick Short, provost, director, Center for ADVANCING UH Faculty Success
    Office of the Provost 203 E. Cullen

3:00–4:00 p.m.  Meeting with Dr. Renu Khator, chancellor, UH System, president, UH, principal investigator, Center for ADVANCING UH Faculty Success
    Office of the President 212 E. Cullen

4:00 p.m.  Site Visit concludes