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## External Evaluation Report for the FY2018–2023 Project Results

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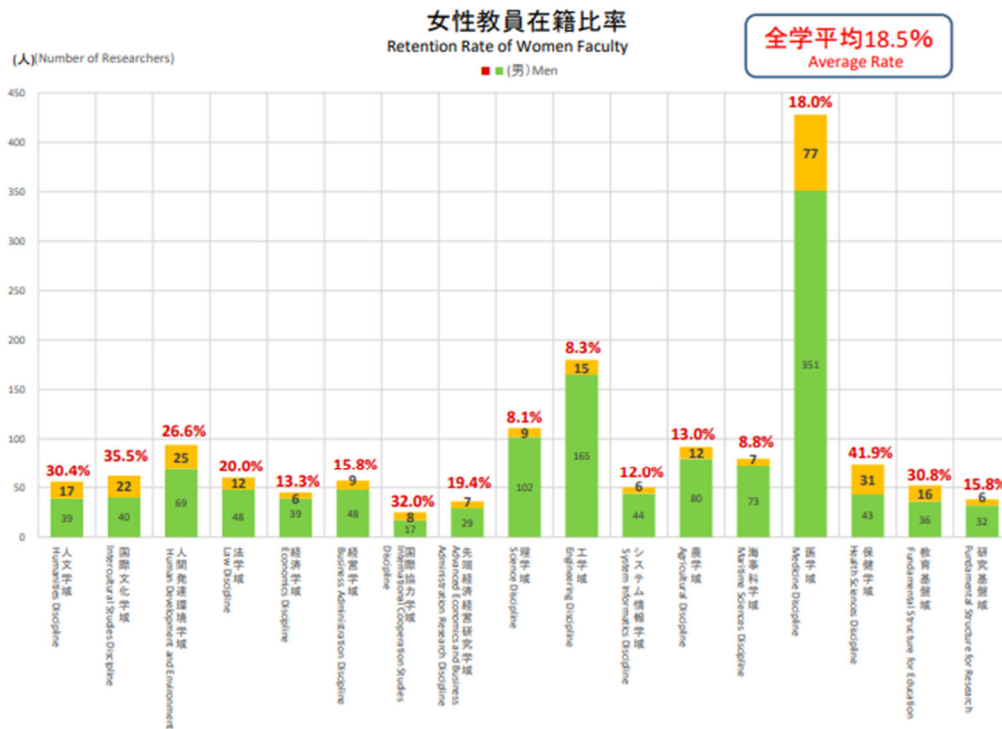
This document reports the results of an external evaluation of the FY2018–2023 project results based on the attached Report on the Results of the Initiative for Realizing Diversity in the Research Environment (Advanced Type) Project for FY2018–2023.

1) Initiatives aimed at achieving a recruitment rate of 30% or more for women researchers

Remarks:

(i) It is highly commendable that an organization responsible for the initiatives has been created, a PDCA cycle has been fully implemented, the 30% target has been clearly indicated, and the results are publicly disclosed. However, throughout the six-year period, the recruitment rate of women researchers has been on a downward trend, and the retention rate of women researchers has deviated from the target despite being on an upward trend (see Figs. 1 and 2 in the Report on the Results of the Initiative for Realizing Diversity in the Research Environment (Advanced Type) Project for FY2018–2023).

(ii) The data shows that even in 2022, the retention rate of female faculty in the Science Discipline and Engineering Discipline was significantly lower than the university-wide target of 21.7% (see the figure below). The recruitment rate of women researchers in the two Disciplines was 12.5% in 2022, which is significantly lower than the university-wide target of 30%.



Source: Retention rate of female faculty in FY2022 (Kobe University official website)

[https://www.office.kobe-u.ac.jp/opge-kyodo-sankaku/data/data/images/joseihiritu\\_kyoin\\_saiyo2022.pdf](https://www.office.kobe-u.ac.jp/opge-kyodo-sankaku/data/data/images/joseihiritu_kyoin_saiyo2022.pdf)

2) Initiatives aimed at improving the percentage of women holding higher ranking positions (promotion rate)

Remarks:

(i) Active support for assistant professors, etc. in all fields has been realized in the program for international collaborative research. The program’s goal is for women researchers to be promoted to higher ranking positions, which serves as a powerful means of empowerment for women researchers. Furthermore, it is highly commendable that improvements have been made to the program, such as the removal of the age restriction.

(ii) It is highly commendable that the target for the promotion rate of women researchers has been set to 20%. This is because support for women researchers is often limited to “recruitment”; women researchers cannot envision their subsequent career paths, which poses a significant hurdle to them. Although the promotion rate has fluctuated considerably each year (see Fig. 3 in the Report on the Results of the Initiative for Realizing Diversity in the Research Environment (Advanced Type) Project for FY2018–2023), efforts have been made toward achieving the target overall, which is commendable.

(iii) It is highly commendable that six individuals were appointed to senior management roles in

FY2023, which is higher than the target of four. However, the fact that not a single woman serves in a top-level management role—President, Director, Vice-President—goes against the purpose of gender equality promotion and is highly regrettable.

### 3) Initiatives aimed at increasing the base of next-generation young researchers

Remarks:

(i) The International Collaborative Early-career Researcher Training Program went very well in 2018. However, owing in part to the COVID pandemic, there have only been a handful of examples since 2020. Similarly, the International Human Resource Exchange Program produced considerable results in FY2018 and FY2019 but was later practically suspended due to the COVID pandemic. Given that, to a certain extent, it initially fulfilled needs and produced results, the program can be considered successful. Hence, its suspension during the pandemic was unfortunate indeed. On the other hand, despite there being an instance where the program was conducted online, it barely functioned even after COVID measures were altered in 2022. This cannot be explained by the impact of the COVID pandemic. Therefore, I am concerned that the program's implementation structure was flawed in some way.

(ii) The “role model networking session” has continued to garner the participation of a certain number of participants, which is commendable.

### 4) Enhance the diversity environment and expand it beyond the university

Remarks:

(i) The establishment of the Basic Policy and Guidelines for Diverse Sexualities and Genders at Kobe University in 2022 is very highly commendable. They are specific in content and thus serve as a model example for guidelines.

(ii) The initiatives aimed at enhancing the diversity environment are commendable. These include creating a fund, holding workshops for external parties, and holding an internal forum.

(iii) The consultation structure is inadequate. I am concerned that members of sexual minorities will be hesitant to contact the general email address of the Gender Equality Promotion Center. This is because it is unclear how sensitive information regarding their sexuality will be handled. In this respect, the consultation structure needs to be improved from the user's perspective.

### 5) Verification of the results and evaluations of the Overseas Dispatch Program for Women Researchers

Remarks:

(i) It is clear that the support program is enhancing the academic achievements of women researchers and is working advantageously for their promotion. In that sense, it is evaluated that

the program has been highly effective.

6) Initiatives over the entire six-year period of the project

Remarks:

(i) Overall, it is evaluated that the project achieved the intended goals to a certain extent. In particular, it is highly commendable that six initiatives—(A) build a new human resources governance system, (B) implement the PI Training Program for International Collaborative Research, (C) implement the International Human Resource Exchange Program, (D) implement the International Collaborative Early-career Researcher Training Program, (E) establish the Diversity Promotion Council, (F) establish the Diversity Fund and build the Diversity Co-creation Network—were set based on the four goals—1) achieve and maintain a recruitment rate of 30% or more for women researchers, 2) improve the percentage of women holding higher ranking positions (promotion rate), 3) increase the base of next-generation young researchers, 4) enhance the diversity environment and expand it beyond the university—and implemented in a planned manner.

(ii) As for “achieve and maintain a recruitment rate of 30% or more for women researchers” and “improve the percentage of women holding higher ranking positions (promotion rate),” even though the recruitment rate struggled to grow beyond 25% or so, the promotion rate exceeded the goal in some years (albeit with large yearly fluctuations). Therefore, it is evaluated that solid achievements were made. However, the greatest issue is the lack of improvement in the percentage of women among science and engineering faculty. Earnest engagement is needed to address this issue going forward. Additionally, given the recent trend in university organization, the total absence of women serving as an Executive Director or Vice-President is unsound.

(iii) It is commendable that sustained efforts have been made for nurturing next-generation researchers and that initiatives have been continued toward enhancing the diversity environment and expanding it beyond the university.

(iv) The Gender Equality Office was reorganized under the Inclusive Campus & Healthcare Center. This is very rational from the perspective of strengthening cooperation, but it should be noted that the significance of gender equality may be trivialized as a result. The promotion of gender equality should contribute to the improvement of the research environment for not only women researchers but also male researchers, and it is also an essential policy for eliminating intersectional discrimination (compound discrimination) against LGBTQ and foreign researchers. In concluding the project, I hope efforts are made to realize gender equality even further with an eye toward Kobe University’s future.