Date: January 4, 2021

External Evaluation Report for the Program "Initiative for Realizing Diversity in the Research Environment" (Advanced Type) for the FYs 2018-2019

Name: Lorri L. Jean, Chief Executive Officer, Los Angeles LGBT Center

This document reports the results of an external evaluation of the FYs 2018-2019 project results based on the separate "Report on the Results of the Program "Initiative for Realizing Diversity in the Research Environment" (Advanced Type) for the FYs 2018-2019.

1) Achieve a recruitment rate of 30% of more for women researchers

Remarks:

The results for recruiting women researchers in FY 2019 were a setback on the path to achieving your FY 2020 goal of 30%. Whereas in FY 2018, you exceeded the target by more than a full percentage point to over 25%, in FY 2019 your actual recruitment rate of 23.3% fell below both the previous year's target (23.9%) and actual result (25.3%). Of course, when you're dealing with relatively small numbers, even a single recruitment failure can significantly impact the results. Yet, understanding likely causes for this decline is important to determining how best to get back on track. Also, how did retention rates for men compare? If there was a similar decline among male researchers, perhaps it's a dynamic that is happening in all research arenas. And, how do these retention rates compare to those in disciplines where more or fewer women are being hired? Such information could provide some insight.

Interviewing department heads with low retention rates (by the director in charge and the Gender Equality Office Director) was a smart strategy in the effort to gather valuable information about potential causes for the decline. It also may provide an incentive for underachieving department heads to do better (they want to avoid those interviews next year!). We were not provided information about retention targets this year, but if they also declined, and did not similarly decline for male researchers, that could be cause for additional concern about whether the organizational culture is conducive to diversity and gender equality (more inclusive of women).

The "Measures to deal with unachieved targets" hopefully will be productive, particularly training on how to eliminate implicit bias. There are also ways to strengthen these proposed measures. Tactics my organization has used successfully in the past have gone further than setting annual or ultimate

recruitment goals. For example, we have focused on the different parts of the recruitment process. Advertising for positions is required in arenas that will reach underrepresented groups. People making the hiring decisions ("hiring managers") are urged to call colleagues and ask if they know promising candidates from the groups being sought and to document these outreach efforts. Our most powerful tool has been requiring that before interviews for any position may begin, the pool of candidates must be diverse, particularly including members of underrepresented groups. So, if women are underrepresented, interviews may not begin until there is at least one woman (ideally more) in the pool of qualified candidates. This requires hiring managers to take greater responsibility for doing whatever is necessary to recruit diverse applicants. Hiring managers predictably complain that it's too difficult to find women and that their work is being hindered if they can't hire a man since they allege that women are too "hard to find" (in the U.S.A., similar arguments are often made regarding efforts to recruit members of other underrepresented groups). And occasionally we've had to hold a position open for months. Ultimately, the short-term stress of holding a position open was more than offset by the gain when hiring someone who advanced our goals. Moreover, holding positions open until there were options to fill them with members of an underrepresented group showed that we were fully committed to increasing our diversity, not just when it was convenient. This sent a powerful message to all of the staff. And, if the pool of qualified candidates includes a member of the underrepresented group, then there's no good reason not to select such a qualified candidate if diversity goals are truly prioritized.

2) Improve the percentage of women holding higher ranking positions
Remarks:
The results with this goal were varied and some were exceedingly impressive. Specifically, you exceeded the promotion targets with relatively consistent rates of promoting women in 2018 and 2019. Moreover, appointing five women to senior administrative positions, significantly exceeding target, set a stellar example. It also should help significantly in creating an environment that is more inclusive of women. Also, the creation of Overseas Work-Life Balance Coordinators in 8 cities in 2018 and 2019 was impressive and should pay significant dividends in the future. On the other hand, 2019 saw far fewer placements in the PI Training Program for International Collaborative Research (and the Preparatory Program) than in 2018.

As was true in 2018, you exceeded 2019 targets for women professors, including a slight improvement in 2019 vs. 2018. But, you once again did not meet targets for women associate professors, although you did increase year over year by half a percentage point. Understanding what factors led to success (or inhibited it) would be important.

It's clear that in areas where University leadership has more unilateral control, i.e., appointing women to higher level administrative positions, creating overseas positions, etc., progress has been made more rapidly. This is clearly a reflection of a significant commitment by University leadership. Progress has not been as significant in areas where department heads presumably make the decision, i.e., the percentage of women professors and associate professors. In the U.S.A. we have an approach called "the carrot and the stick," a metaphor for a combination of reward and punishment to induce a desired behavior. Not being able to fill a position until you have women applicants could be deemed a punishment. It's also important to consider rewards. If department heads are a stumbling block in achieving your goals, are there positive incentives that could be provided to encourage progress? For example, in the U.S.A. it is not uncommon in competitive hiring environments for private corporations to offer a monetary referral fee to any employee who brings in a candidate who is ultimately hired. Similarly, public acknowledgment or other benefits for those who are succeeding can inspire others to do the same.

3) Increase the base of next-generation young researchers
Remarks:
You enjoyed some important success here. 25% more women (5 vs. 4) were dispatched under the International Human Resource Exchange Program in 2019 than in 2018. And you state that the rate of young researchers rose to nearly 20% at the end of FY 2019. However, there was a significant drop in women dispatched in the International Collaborative early-career Researcher Training Program.

This is also an area where you're playing the long game—making investments now by appealing to junior and senior high school girls that you hope will pay off in the future with more women majoring in science and technology. You have two programs where demand is very strong—the Open Campus and the Kansai Kagaku Juku. According to your report, available slots in each program fill up immediately. If it were possible to increase the capacity in both programs so the base of the pyramid that you're building is larger, you would likely see a greater return on your investment in the future. And, because these are youth programs, you may be able to interest corporate partners in financial sponsorships of these programs so that you can more easily afford to increase capacity.

4) Enhance the diversity environment and expand it beyond the university
Remarks:

All targets were achieved for this goal. But is enough being done here? Consistent and continuous promotion about the Kobe University Diversity Statement and the level of importance placed on this statement (and its attendant goals) by University leadership is important. Genuine commitment must be demonstrated. This is done not only by hiring more women, but by creating a culture within the university that promotes actual inclusion of women as equals. Also, what kind of cooperative framework is being developed outside of the University? In this regard, which areas are likely to result in the greatest progress in your diversity goals? Those should be where the greatest focus is placed. For example, whose responsibility is it to raise money for the Diversity Fund? If high level staff are tasked with specific fundraising targets for this fund, those targets are more likely to be met. Could a "campaign" to secure a specific dollar goal for the Diversity Fund be created, publicized and implemented (that is often how universities and nonprofits in the U.S.A. fund particular projects). Also, are specific goals being set for the Diversity Education Program? In California, the law requires all employees to take certain kinds of training every few years. Could a similar requirement at Kobe University be helpful? Perhaps such mandates could start with higher level management/professors.

5) Verification of the results and evaluation of the Overseas Dispatch Program for Women Researchers
Remarks:

Table 6 is a powerful testament to the success of the Overseas Dispatch Program for Women Researchers. Significant improvement was achieved in virtually every area for the two-year period after the start of the project compared with the two-year period before the start. It will be important to continue to gather and assess this data to see if improvement escalates in future years as participants in this program gain seniority and advance. Table 7 also shows clear differences between dispatched professors vs. average women professors in academic papers and between dispatched assistant professors vs. average women professors in presentations at international conferences. But given that women associate professors who were dispatched showed no difference in comparison to average women associate professors in international conference presentations, it calls into question whether the difference for assistant professors was simply an aberration rather than the result of being dispatched. It will be important to assess several more years of data to reach a definitive conclusion.

6) Issues to be addressed with respect to this project (Please add comments regarding "Measures Addressing Issues Identified in the FY 2018 External Evaluation (Report)" here)
Remarks:

In the United States in 2020 the entire landscape changed around "all things diversity" due to the murder of George Floyd (among others), the unprecedented spotlight shined on the alarming incidence of anti-black violence by law enforcement and the national reckoning around racism that has been prompted. This, in turn, has elicited a significant increase in expectations and demands by employees, students, faculty and other stakeholders for concrete and immediate improvements in diversity measures (about race as well as gender and sexual orientation). Such measures include substantial progress with the numbers of women and people of color hired and the numbers promoted to high level positions, as well as reducing the incidence of explicit and implicit bias within the organization. Leaders who fail to deliver, or who make mistakes in these arenas, or whose staff make mistakes, are literally losing their jobs because of it (a result being demanded by constituents—no excuses or explanations are acceptable). Entire companies are threatened.

One of President Trump's unproductive reactions has been to issue an executive order that prohibits diversity training by recipients of federal funds if such training acknowledges the facts of racism and sexism in our society. The order applies broadly to federal agencies and the military as well as government contractors and recipients of federal grants, including universities and nonprofits. While President-elect Biden will certainly reverse this order, it has thrown all of these sectors into disarray in the sense that all are engaged in serious diversity efforts from which their constituents are now expecting much more but which, if continued, could jeopardize funding that is crucial to their financial survival. At the same time, all of this has awakened people as never before to underrepresentation and injustice. People no longer have patience for incremental change that takes many years. They want to see significant results and they want to see them now.

It is hard for me to assess Kobe University's results without being influenced by this U.S.A. cultural context, which is having an impact far beyond our borders. I do not know how this may be impacting Japan. But with increases in foreign students, expectations of Kobe University may be changing more quickly. Regardless, my counsel is that leaders and institutions in industrialized nations that fail to take note of these changing dynamics around diversity and discrimination and respond concretely do so at their own peril. This applies not only to people of other races, but to women, LGBTQ people and more.

Therefore, when I review the "Measures Addressing Issues Identified in the FY2018 External Evaluation (Report)" in this context, I have two reactions. One is that some important concrete progress has been made. The other is that what has been achieved and what remains to be implemented is not enough. Specific questions that occur to me for each goal include:

Recruitment rate of 30%:

- What, specifically, is being done to address the fact that with regard to the 30% recruitment goal, efforts in 2019 failed to build on the gains of 2018 and even fell behind what was achieved in 2018?

- Key executives have visited underperforming department heads, but have there been any consequences for such underperformance? Have specific measures been set that they are expected to meet and against which they will be judged?

Improve the percentage of women holding higher ranking positions:

- The target value is acknowledged as being low, but is characterized as being "difficult to raise." Why? If the University is truly committed to this effort, why can't a more appropriate goal be easily established?

- It shouldn't be difficult to discern the cause of why the percentage of women associate professors has actually decreased during a time when the goal is for an increase. Has the cause been determined and what specific measures are being taken to correct it?

Increase the base of next-generation young researchers:

- A relatively easy solution to one of the biggest problems here is to increase the capacity of the two training programs that fill up immediately. This could have the ancillary benefit of inspiring greater involvement by corporate partners.

- It is also important to remember that just getting more female college students enrolled and interested in research is not enough to achieve your ultimate goals. The environment also needs to be inclusive enough of women (e.g., with examples of women role models in key positions and where the University Administration reacts quickly to stop discrimination and harassment) to inspire them to stay for graduate programs and go on to careers in higher education.

Enhance the diversity environment and expand it beyond the university:

- Specific public relationships campaigns should be identified and implemented.

- Attention must be paid both to strengthening existing relationships with corporate partners and to developing relationships with new corporate partners.

Efforts specific to this initiative:

- It is simple to ask the views of dispatched researchers about support systems. Do it as soon as possible.

Challenges for this Initiative:

- Set clear recruitment and promotion rate requirements further into the future. I understand 2020 was year 3 of a 6-year program. It is vital to have a long-term strategy. Not only does this illustrate the seriousness of the current effort, it ensures that all of the investments made during the 6-year program can pay off long into the future. Perhaps an initial 10 year program could set goals based on what will achieve results above the average of national universities.
- Set a clear goal for a significant increase in the number of women researchers dispatched overseas and implement it.
- Examine where institutional barriers exist to achieving the goals you've established. A few examples might include:
  - Do faculty and staff understand the importance of this initiative? Have they been trained in recognizing implicit bias and how to make the University environment more inclusive to women? Are there pockets of resistance? What can be done by University leadership to change this dynamic?
  - Are there issues faced by women in Japan that are different from those faced by men which could be addressed by enlightened University policies? For example, in the U.S.A., professional women with husbands and families continue to be responsible for a disproportionate amount of housework and childrearing. This means work-life balance issues may be more critical to women professionals than to men, who may have fewer home-based responsibilities. Employers in the U.S.A. who have understood this dynamic and who have implemented programs or policies to address it (e.g., flextime or child care) have done much better in recruiting and retaining women.
  - One significant institutional barrier can be that when discrimination against women (including sexual harassment) exists but is not addressed and corrected immediately, it sends a message that the environment is not safe for women. It is critical to immediately engage with departments where such human resources-related problems exist to correct the problems. This likely would require more than meeting with the deans.