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External Evaluation Report for the FY2020–2021 Project Results

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This document reports the results of an external evaluation of the FY2020–2021 project results based on the attached Report on the Results of the Initiative for Realizing Diversity in the Research Environment (Advanced Type) Project for FY2020–2021.

1) Achieve a recruitment rate of over 30% female researchers

Remarks: Although the recruitment target of 30% was not achieved, overall, there is an upward trend, sustaining 24%. For FY2021 in particular, it is highly commendable that women were newly hired for almost all academic areas. The retention rate has increased, albeit only slightly. In order to achieve the target, clarification of responsible parties and publication of numerical figures, among the previous findings, have been implemented, which shows the motivation to improve effectiveness. From the above, although some issues remain, it is commendable that steady progress has been made toward the 30% target.

2) Improve the percentage of women holding higher ranking positions (the percentage of promotions)

Remarks: The numerical target is 20%. The rate for FY2020 is low at 7.32%. Although it doubled in FY2021, the target has not been reached. In FY2020, perhaps as a result of the overall suppression of the number of promotions, the number of female promotions was also suppressed. However, there were no female promotions even in academic areas that allow multiple promotions. The university will need to analyze the background and reasons specifically for this. Targets are being met with regard to executives. The PI Training Program for International Collaborative Research Overseas has been devised to be supported online due to the COVID-19 situation. From the above, efforts are recognized for the target for higher ranking positions, but it is difficult to say that sufficient results have been achieved. In particular, a specific analysis is required on the differences between FY2018–2019 and FY2020–2021. Then, the following measures should be clarified.

3) Increase the base of next-generation young researchers

Remarks: Regarding the International Collaborative Early-career Researcher Training Program, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is unavoidable that the number of applications and results will

be low in FY2020–2021. To compensate for the lack of mobility, however, a reflective analysis would be necessary to determine if alternative methods could be considered to support development of young researchers.

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

Remarks: The university is recognized for its ingenuity and steady efforts to enhance the diversity environment. In particular, it is commendable that active efforts are made to dispel unconscious bias and provide management training. Meanwhile, the donation amount is low. It is somewhat questionable whether it is sustainable as a “diversity fund”. As a future direction, it seems necessary to specifically consider, for example, explicitly incorporating some form of profit-sharing (information provision, research cooperation, etc.) for donor companies in the system.

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

Remarks: No information in the performance report. Although we can assume that the COVID-19 pandemic made it difficult to dispatch researchers, there might have been room for consideration of alternative supporting measures and the establishment of an online research environment.

6) Overall remarks (please add comments regarding the “Report on the Actions Taken in Response to the Findings of the FY2018 and FY2019 External Evaluations” here)

Remarks: Overall, efforts for FY2020–2021 can be evaluated as making steady progress toward achieving the target. The COVID-19 situation made it unavoidable that the overseas dispatch program was not fully implemented, despite being an important pillar of the efforts. While making efforts for partial online implementation ongoing, further innovations are required to ensure sustainability in the future. Note that various surveys have indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic has increased burden on the family of female researchers and reduced their research performance. It is also desirable to consider, to the extent possible, how to take into account the impact of COVID-19 on recruitment and promotion of female researchers. It is commendable that the responses to the findings in FY2018–2019 are addressed in a sequential and serious manner.