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External Evaluation Report for the Program "Initiative for Realizing Diversity in the Research Environment (Advanced type)" for the FY 2022

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This document reports the results of an external evaluation of the FY 2022 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 FY 2022."

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

Remarks: It is unfortunate that the hiring rate for 2022 stood at 19.2%, well below the target. What is encouraging is that the issue is being discussed at the highest levels and the GE Office is directly involved in the discussions through its Director. At this point, it is critical that all the plans that have been discussed and formulated, including setting the rules for information dissemination, are acted upon without any further delay to make sure action is taken swiftly and transparency about information sharing is realized. In the report on the progress regarding the implementation of recommendations, all but one recommendation is finalized for this objective. All others are in progress. It would be useful to indicate the level of progress, perhaps by indicating completion by target date (month) in 2023.

As an external evaluator, I would also appreciate getting more details regarding the "more active measures" that are being considered as well as "institutionalized measures" that have been identified. While I appreciate that the reports have to be concise, lack of specific details makes it difficult to have a full understanding of the constraints and opportunities.

2) Improve the percentage of women holding higher ranking positions

Remarks: the results for this goal are also disappointing as the result of 9.62% less than half of the target rate of 20%. While the university should be commended for its efforts to put in place different initiatives, including the training program for collaborative research and planned support package, these initiatives may not be addressing the core reasons since analyses and investigations are pending. It should also be pointed out that target numbers of women researchers for the training programme are too low. Women faculty supported by these programmes should reflect actual numbers and needs. One or two women faculty out of how many who are in line for promotion and who express an interest in getting support from this initiative? There seems to be

a big discrepancy between set targets and capacity of programs put in place to help achieve these targets. A more realistic target setting may be envisaged.

Regarding the number of women researchers in senior management roles, it is noted that in FY 2022, there were four and that this number actually already meets the target for FY 2023. While this is a satisfactory result, I would be interested to know the reason for the decrease from 5 to 4 compared to the previous year.

3) Increase the base of next-generation young researchers

Remarks: I fully support the initiatives already undertaken under this goal and encourage the university strongly to implement all of the recommendations (3-1 through 3-4) pertaining to this goal without any delay.

Globally, constructive mentoring and role modeling have proven to be powerful strategies to support and younger researchers in their careers. Mentoring of women researchers by caring and positive male mentors are especially effective in formal institutional settings. Gender Equality Office could identify appropriate male mentors both from within the University and from the private sector partners who would be willing to provide this support to some of the faculty as an alternative method.

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

Remarks: I congratulate Kobe University for all of the initiatives undertaken in FY 2022 to enhance the diversity environment and expand it beyond the university. I recommend continued engagement with partner companies on a regular basis with well thought-out and well-planned sessions throughout the year FY 2023 and ensure their continued commitment through positive messages and success stories. Some form of recognition can be accorded to partners through special awards or certificated of engagement.

5) Issues to be addressed with respect to this project (Please add comments regarding “Report on the Status and the Results of the Actions Taken in Response to the Findings of the FY 2020 and FY 2021 External Evaluations” here)

Remarks: This project is a flagship initiative that will have impact not only on Kobe University itself but on the larger community of the project partners as well. I urge Kobe University administration to continue to support this initiative 2023. Projects of this type take a long time to get rooted and institutionalized. This is not only a project of increasing the number of women

faculty and researchers of a university but it is one of changing established out-dated systems and structures through influencing behavior change. Changing systems and structures and making them inclusive and gender-responsive is a long term process that require political will, determination, resilience, patience and long-term support, including financial support.

I wish you more success in FY 2023