



Rochester Institute of Technology
AdvanceRIT Grant
Internal Evaluation Meta-Analysis

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Evaluation Scope of Work

Beginning in late 2015, AdvanceRIT contracted with the University of Washington Center for Evaluation & Research for STEM Equity (CERSE) to provide targeted evaluations of select programs. Since that time, CERSE has provided IRB support to RIT for the evaluation of the *Connect* Grants, conducted interviews and focus groups of *Connect* Grantees, analyzed the quantitative data on the *Connect* Grants, authored multiple *Connect* grant reports and PowerPoint presentations, analyzed multiple unconscious bias-related event surveys and created presentation slides with results, consulted on modifications to existing evaluation tools, quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed the *Connectivity* Series events, evaluated the WISE program, and the RIT Women Leaders program.

Key Impacts

Increased Awareness was an impact of all of the AdvanceRIT offerings. *Connectivity* Series events often built awareness about bias and how to be proactive at intervening against discriminatory acts. In addition, *Connect* Grants helped to build people's self-awareness of their skills, and improved self-confidence that they could achieve their goals. The WISE and RIT Women Leaders programs also increased awareness, but in different ways. WISE faculty felt that the work of the organization has helped the College of Science to be more aware of gender issues. The RIT Women Leaders program had significant and meaningful impacts on the self-awareness of participating individuals.

Increased Action occurred because of some of the AdvanceRIT grant programs. In particular, the unconscious bias related workshops often increased attendee's intention to change their behaviors or practices on campus and in the classroom. *Connect* grantees themselves often took additional actions on their research or for the good of the community as part of their grants; sometimes this resulted in broader community action as well.

Sense of Community grew during the AdvanceRIT grant. *Connectivity* Series attendees were able to connect with other women to form new networks. These networks provided mentoring, learning and sometimes collaboration. *Connect* Grants helped to improve working environments and women's work-life, and strengthened women's internal and external networks. The visibility of the Women of Color and Deaf and Hard of Hearing faculty events had an institutional impact by raising the internal visibility of the groups and strengthening community. Both WISE and the RIT Women Leaders Program had positive impacts on sense of community for most of the participants.

Career Progression and Development was a key impact of the *Connect* Grants and the *Connectivity* Series. *Connectivity* attendees reported progress toward promotion and tenure, and finding other researchers with similar interests, which improved productivity. *Connect* grantees saw career-related benefits from mentoring relationships, increased leadership skills, research autonomy and visibility. Many *Connect* grantees also described a sense that they now had more value and influence with the university.

The Untold Story

There is an untold story of the work that was done to make these AdvanceRIT events and programs happen. Many of the interviewees described that they were thankful to RIT broadly for providing these programs and events; AdvanceRIT was not always named by the interviewees or given credit for this work. This suggests that AdvanceRIT has helped to create an environment in which people feel “cared for” by RIT at large. The many hours that went into planning and administering both the *Connect Grants* and *Connectivity Series* were repaid in terms of gratitude to RIT broadly. AdvanceRIT should be given kudos for their work in improving the university climate.

Areas for Improvement

Diverse Involvement. AdvanceRIT has been relatively inclusive over time with respect to the targets of their activities. That said, there is still room for growth in finding ways for men to be involved, ways for leaders to engage meaningfully as gender equity models for the community, and ways to be more intentionally inclusive of non-binary gender identities. The need for leadership visibility around gender equity came up across multiple evaluations. Continue with existing focus on Women of Color and Deaf and Hard of Hearing women faculty.

Leadership Training. Much progress has been made in this area with the RIT Women Leaders program, but there is still room for improvement. The recommendation here is two-fold: provide professional development for current leaders on how to best support women’s advancement and gender equity, and provide continued professional development for women faculty on leadership skills and offer spaces to practice leadership strategies.

Continue Research Seed Fund Support. *Connect Grants* had wide-ranging impacts; these grants were very beneficial for faculty who needed a bit of a jumpstart on their research. As RIT transitions to be an even more research-focused university, continuing these sorts of seed funds will benefit the organizational transition.

Fix the institution, not the women. Continue to push the organization to modify/add/remove policies and practices to make them more gender equitable. While professional development for women’s skills is desired by the community, the onus of change must not rest only on the women themselves. While some evaluations indicated that a focus on organizational change was happening, people still hoped that RIT would continue “on this trajectory,” inspiring continued leadership accountability for change.

On the following pages, you will find one page summaries for three of the AdvanceRIT evaluations that CERSE conducted: *Connect Grants*, *Connectivity Series*, and a summary of the Unconscious Bias workshop evaluations. WISE and RIT Women Leaders evaluations are reported elsewhere.

AdvanceRIT *Connectivity* Series Executive Summary

The *Connectivity* Series at the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) aims to develop and deliver an effective professional development workshop series for women faculty in STEM. The series focuses in four areas: 1) events aimed at organizational learning and development and unconscious bias, 2) recruitment of women faculty, 3) retention of women faculty, and 4) advancement of women faculty (areas 3 and 4 had the most events, with area 1 as the next most common). As part of the larger AdvanceRIT project, the series is designed to make progress in all four Bolman and Deal frames for understanding organizations in order to make systemic improvements for women faculty at RIT, and especially for Women of Color (WoC) faculty and deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) faculty.

The *Connectivity* Series includes events organized by the AdvanceRIT team; the series also operates as an umbrella program for events hosted by *Connect* grantees and others. There have been 189 *Connectivity* Series events from Year 2 to Year 7. The Women of Color (WoC) and Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) *Connectivity* Series' events comprised about 34% (64/189) of all mapped *Connectivity* Series events for years 2-7. These events were led by faculty in each population and content for each series was developed based on quantitative and qualitative research performed by RIT faculty.

The *Connectivity* Series was intentionally inclusive. While the target population was women faculty in STEM fields, all RIT faculty were typically invited; staff who work closely with students were also sometimes invited. On average, 94% reported that attending events was a valuable use of their time.

Summary of Unique Attendees at *Connectivity* Series Events (Grant Years 2-7):

	Total Unique Attendees	Tenured or Tenure-stream Attendees*	Unconscious Bias Events (n=45)
Male	458	298	350
Female	628	270	500
Total	1086	568	850

*The TT attendees represent over 83% of women TT faculty (270/326) based on the number of women faculty offered the opportunity to attend a Series event over years 2-7 and 47% of men TT faculty (298/630).

Connectivity Series events fulfilled the Bolman and Deal frames¹ to the following extents: Human Resources goals (176 events or 93% of all events), Symbolic goals (120, 63%), Political goals (89, 47%), and Structural goals (83, 44%). Given the intent of the series, the focus on Human Resources goals is appropriate. Four focus groups were conducted in December 2017 with 24 participants to understand the impact of the *Connectivity* Series events. The greatest impacts were as follows. Participants indicated that the *Connectivity* Series events helped them to strategically advance their careers whether pursuing promotion and tenure or finding other researchers with aligned interests. In addition, the *Connectivity* Series offered attendees opportunities to learn from and identify with other women in academia, and expand their communities and networks. Interviewees described valuable strategies they learned through *Connectivity* Series events, such as building awareness about bias and being increasingly proactive at intervening against discriminatory acts.

¹ In their book on "Reframing Organizations," Bolman and Deal offer four frames or lenses through which individuals experience and view their organizations. The AdvanceRIT project is designed to make progress in all four frames in order to make systemic improvements for women faculty at RIT.

AdvanceRIT *Connect* Grants Executive Summary

The goal of *Connect* Grants is to “support leadership and career development for all tenured and pre-tenured faculty at RIT,” in line with the AdvanceRIT project objectives. In their final reports, grantees identified 5 main barriers to gender equity among tenured and pre-tenured faculty, around which their projects centered. These five barriers were: professional development for women faculty and women faculty of color (13/16), disparity in opportunities in academia by gender (10/16), struggling with work/life balance (8/16), desire for community (especially among women faculty and women faculty of color) (6/16), and professional development for deaf and hard of hearing faculty (1/16). Combined together, these identified barriers address the structural, human resources, political, and symbolic objectives of the AdvanceRIT project.

From 2014 to 2019, there have been 58 *Connect* Grants awarded to 46 different faculty members (43 women, 3 men) and two departments. Grants have varied in size from \$1,000 to 13,500 (\$5,692 on average) and the *Connect* Grant program has disbursed a total of \$330,159 since its inception; 55% of all proposals were awarded. Ten colleges have had *Connect* Grant awardees; 35 grants went to STEM fields, 11 went to SBS fields, and 12 went to other fields. In total, 111 unique faculty members have been involved in these grants and benefited from them, and some faculty have been involved in more than one *Connect* Grant.

The AdvanceRIT *Connect* Grant program has resulted in strong impacts for the grantees of the programs as well as the broader RIT community, based on an evaluation of the program. Individual (Human Resources and Symbolic) impacts of the *Connect* Grants have been related to improving women’s work life, professional development, career advancement, and improving their working environment. In particular, *Connect* grantees strengthened internal and external networks which led to career advancement, benefitted from mentoring relationships as mentors and mentees, built skills (including leadership skills) to support their professional development, increased their research autonomy and project visibility, increased their confidence in disseminating and being experts of their work, increased their value and influence, and supported the advancement of women and other underrepresented groups in their field, through their grant projects.

Organizational (Structural) impacts of the *Connect* Grants at RIT are less common than individual impacts, but are related to refining institutional structures and installing practices to promote representation and advancement of women faculty. Some grantees worked to transform their institutional environment by strengthening community and raising internal awareness of their work, and also created new learning and leadership opportunities which helped to modify institutional policies, practices, and procedures.

AdvanceRIT Unconscious Bias Events Evaluation Executive Summary

UW CERSE conducted in-depth survey analysis from nine different unconscious bias events from 2016 to 2018. These include Bystander Awareness & Action Workshops with RIT Diversity Theater (2016, 2017, May 2018, Nov. 2018, April 2019), Creating Vibrant Learning Environments (2017 and 2019), and 2018 and 2019 Michigan Players. Many of these evaluations included initial and follow-up surveys about 3-4 weeks after the event. The response rates have been great for these surveys, ranging from 71%-95% on the initial surveys to 38% to 71% on the follow-up surveys. These response rates suggest that these findings are likely representative of the population and should be taken seriously.

Selected Findings from Bystander Awareness & Action Workshops:

	2016 (2 weeks post)	2017 (4 weeks post)	2018, May (4 weeks post)	2018, Nov. (4 weeks post)	2019 (4 weeks post)
I am more aware of incidents on campus where bystanders would be useful	82%	79%	79%	88%	70%
I shared with others the idea of being an active bystander	73%	79%	80%	66%	50%
I have been an active bystander on campus (since attending workshop)	61%	50%	54%	22%	60%

Attendees reported greater self-efficacy and feel they can make campus a more inclusive place by being an active bystander. On many of these surveys, there were continued calls for more events like these.

Creating Vibrant Learning Environments Workshop:

A total of 81%-100% agreed that the session enhanced how they think about interactions in diverse classrooms, 80%-87% agreed that the activities and discussion enhanced their understanding of how norms can affect learning, and 90%-96% planned to take action to create a positive learning experience for students. Attendees described plans to be more observant in their classrooms, more intentionally inclusive in the future, and to regularly establish classroom norms.

CRLT Michigan Player Workshops (“Mariam”/“Carter” and “Moving the Needle”):

The immediate post-event surveys showed increased: attendee awareness, knowledge and skills, and an impulse to improve the departmental climate for marginalized students and about sexual harassment. There was significant praise for all the sessions, as well as a desire for more professional development of this nature.

The 4-week follow-up surveys indicated that there were internal conceptual shifts, increased awareness, and expanded conceptions of the role that staff and faculty can play in creating a more inclusive climate. There was “stickiness” to attendees’ learnings, since responses rarely saw large decreases in percentages that agreed/strongly agreed from the initial survey to the follow-up. And some of the results are reflective of the expected developmental arc of attendees, such that as people develop more complex understandings of these issues, they may actually feel less comfortable taking action.