

## Making a Splash: Tracking scholarly activity in the Advance system

These days, whenever we want to know something, we have oceans of data we can tap. Open a database, type in a few simple keystrokes, run a few queries, and *Shazam!* – you have an answer, right? Well, not quite. It seems we're missing out on some fundamental questions about faculty at UCSF, e.g., what proportion of our UCSF basic scientists are women? Or, who are the basic scientists in the clinical departments? "These are fairly common requests, but there are no campus systems that contain this information," says Brian Alldredge, vice provost for academic affairs.

In an attempt to answer that and other pertinent inquiries, Brian has a new initiative that all faculty, at some point or another, will experience. He and his team have built a new "splash page," going live today – July 1 – on the *Advance* site, which we all use, particularly when we're approaching a promotion.

After you log in, *but before you get to the areas where you can take care of the business you're looking to do*, you'll have to "self-identify your primary creative/scholarly activity." You'll get to pick one area from a relatively short list that was vetted by a number of faculty stakeholders.

Brian realizes that some people may be frustrated about not finding an exact match for their research focus or that they can't check more than one box, especially when many of us wear multiple hats. But the flip side is avoiding a time-consuming and cumbersome survey that would frustrate people. "The perfect is the enemy of the good," Brian says. He goes on to explain: "This is a relatively low-tech solution to an important problem. We could invest a lot more time and effort to refine it, but as a starting point, it's a great way to gather information that's actionable to help faculty."

Knowing people who identify as primarily basic scientists, or behavioral scientists, or education researchers, to name only three, will also help us target communications. If a new lab core unit comes online, we could send an email to everyone who would most likely be interested in that – and not have to spam those who don't care.

We also can use this new insight to answer important questions, such as: "Are women in the basic sciences advancing in their career promotions at the same rate as their male colleagues?" (Sure, we could venture a guess, but wouldn't it be great to have real and continuously updated data?)

The information is strictly for internal purposes only and will not be publicly available. One nice thing about the splash page is, once you fill it out, it will vanish until you ask to change it or you have a new academic advancement action.

Want to know more? Check this link to read [Brian's announcement to the campus](#). Or, feel free to reach out to [advanceproject@ucsf.edu](mailto:advanceproject@ucsf.edu).