

Building Collaborative Partnerships: The Faculty Center

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ABSTRACT

Having recognized the need to improve faculty development services, the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) created the Faculty Center, a tri-funded collaboration between the Dean of Libraries, the Provost, and the Vice President for Research. The UTSA Faculty Center is a venue for faculty-related information and services. Housed in the campus library, the Faculty Center offers dozens of professional development workshops every year in a centralized location. Additionally, rooms can be reserved for meetings and events at no additional cost to faculty. We serve all university faculty including tenured, tenure-track and non-tenure-track. Many of the workshops are tailored to assist faculty preparing for their tenure reviews.

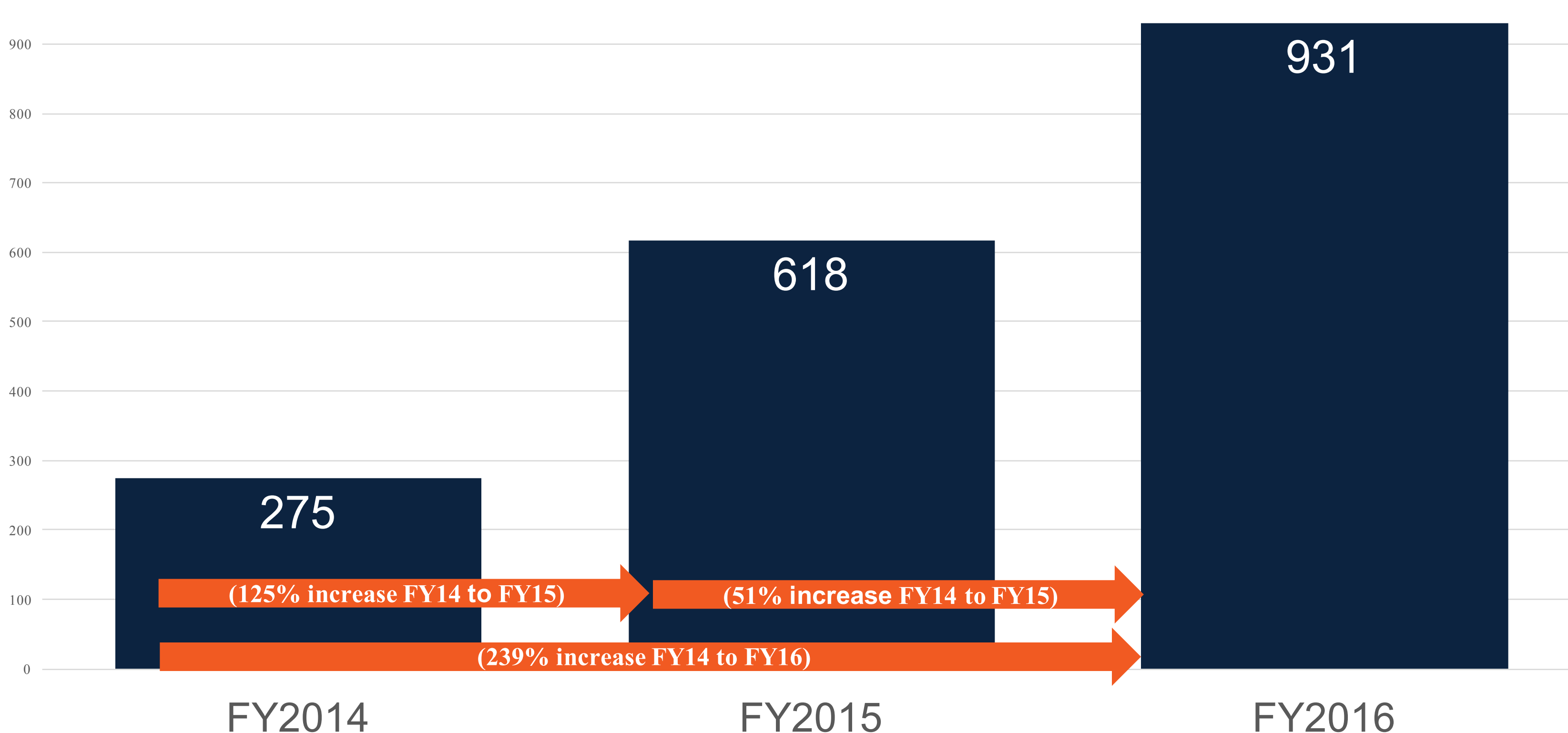
In their recent summary of Research Universities and the Future of America, The National Research Council identified “revitalizing the partnership” as a critical action necessary for national prosperity. The impact of our Faculty Center on research development initiatives has been noteworthy. Unlike faculty centers at other institutions, faculty are not confined to labs or digital scholarship centers. Workshop attendance has increased from 685 in the initial year of operation to 930 in 2016. In the past year, over 60 professional development and networking events were offered. These offerings have brought together key players from all disciplines to enhance their grant writing skills, and network with other academicians, researchers, governmental units, and industry partners, fostering an atmosphere of collaboration. Across all networking events, more than 85% of attendees reported meeting a new colleague from a different college, department or external organization that they could engage in collaborative research. Therefore, we posit that the Faculty Center is a unique and meaningful asset to our university, and should be viewed as a model for the exchange of ideas, and advancement towards top-tier research.

Usage

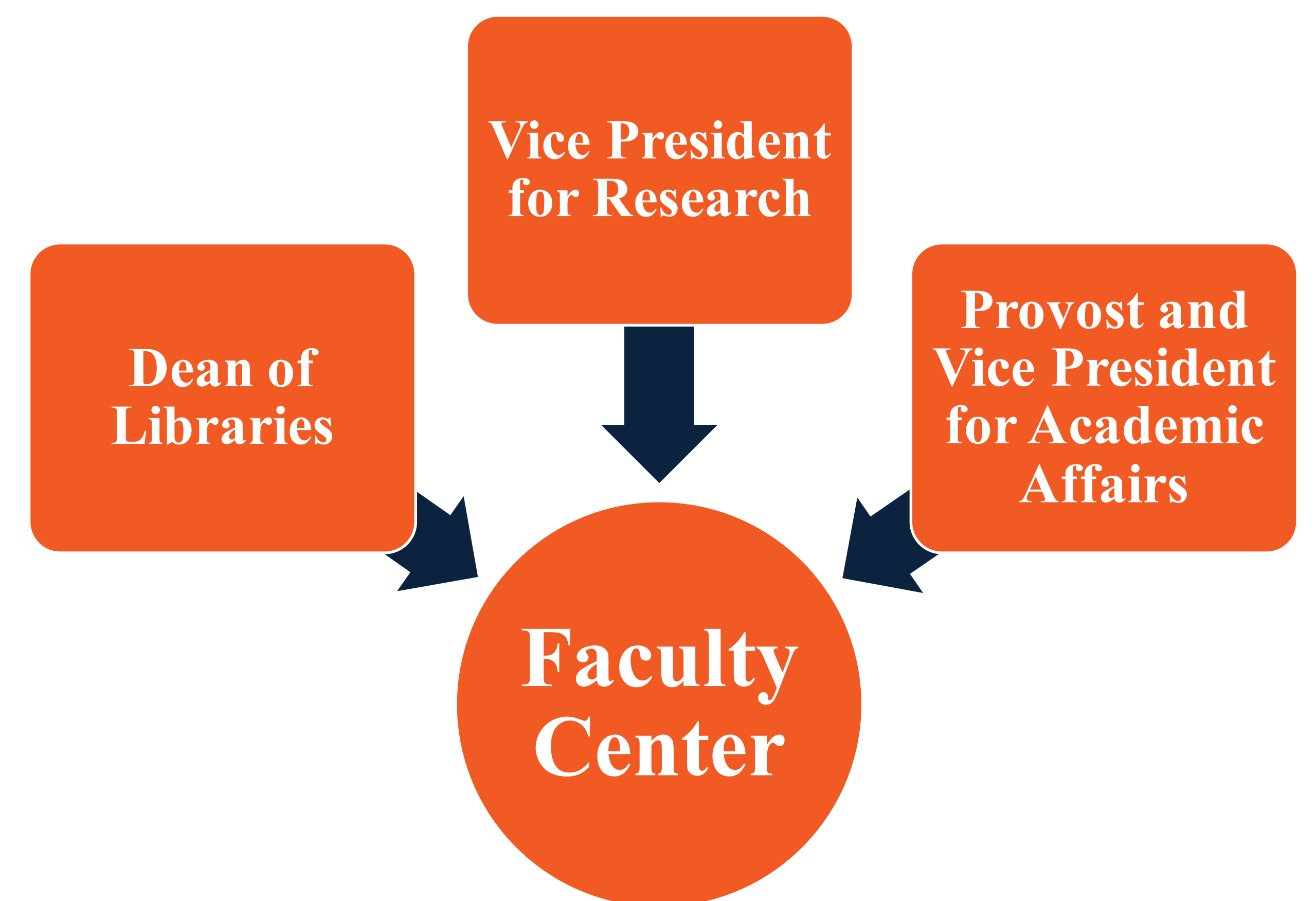
- Workshops—Workshops are hosted throughout the year covering a wide range of topics from grant writing, to project evaluation. Beginning in Fall 2017, UTSA will launch the New Faculty Institute, a collaboration between teaching and research. The institute will require all new faculty at the assistant professor level to attend workshops as part of tenure
- Events & conferences—Faculty are able to reserve spaces free of charge through an online reservation portal
- End of semester faculty mixers
- Networking events & partnership meetings—internal meetings as well as meetings with potential collaborators (i.e. federal agencies)
- New Faculty Orientation

Attendance Data

Number of Meetings (FY2014 to FY2016)



Partners



Location & Venues

Located on the fourth floor of main campus library, Faculty Center rooms can be reserved for faculty meetings and events. Faculty are encouraged to drop-in at any time to take advantage of the casual seating areas—utilized for networking with colleagues or working while away from the office.



Faculty Quotes

“The faculty center serves three key functions for UTSA: 1) it provides a space for spontaneous interdisciplinary interaction; 2) it offers a single, neutral space for information sharing and teamwork, and 3) it increases faculty morale by sending the message that faculty are valued. UTSA knows that faculty are at the heart of our success.”

-Dr. Mary Dixon, Associate Vice Provost and Professor of Communication

“The JPL Faculty Center is not only a space that encourages (and builds) collaboration between faculty and staff, but a place one can go to in order to locate services to assist with collaboration. For example, I reached out to the Faculty Center to assist with a large, community/research-based event, the first annual UTSA's celebration of International Literacy Day. The Faculty Center assisted with all logistics and helped me.”

-Dr. Misty Sailors, Professor of Interdisciplinary Learning

“The Faculty Center represents a critical nexus where strategic partnerships are fostered and grown. Our faculty are grateful to have a modern space that is dedicated for their use.”

-Dr. Harry Millwater, Associate Dean of Research, College of Engineering

Links

- <http://faculty.utsa.edu/>
- <http://faculty.utsa.edu/about/room-information/>
- <http://faculty.utsa.edu/about/>

References

Research Universities, Committee On, Board On Higher Education and Workforce, Policy And Global Affairs, National Research Council, National Research Council (U.S.). Committee on Research Universities, and National Research Council (U.S.). Board on Higher Education and Workforce. *National Academies Press*. Washington, D.C.: National Academies, 2012. Web. 25 Apr. 2017.