

Motion to amend the faculty handbook, section 1.4.1.2, paragraph 3, under Facultyj Evaluation Categories (revised)

Rationale:

With a goal of transparency and communication in mind, this motion aims to eliminate ambiguity in the annual faculty evaluation process. Faculty evaluation is discussed in more than one place in the FTR handbook. In section 1.4, the areas of evaluation are listed, the reasons for doing it are given, and the responsibility of the chair is described as follows: “Each faculty evaluation shall be made by the Department chair consistent with the criteria that follow, in accordance with a given faculty classification and any published Department-specific evaluation criteria, and in accordance with College evaluation procedures.” Under 1.4.1.2, it is specified that the Department “shall provide written descriptions of any department-specific evaluation criteria to be considered” and that the department is responsible for communicating in writing “how different activities might be weighted in light of department or university goals, and examples of evidence that can be submitted.” Finally, under 1.4.1.4.1, item 2, it is specified that the Chair’s evaluation shall include identification of “strengths and/or weaknesses within the categories of teaching, professional contributions, and university service...”

Potential areas of ambiguity or miscommunication fall under “published Department-specific evaluation criteria,” “how different activities might be weighted,” and communication of strengths or weaknesses. Finally, under item 3, again in 1.4.1.4.1, the Department Chair is expected to “assign a numerical value” corresponding to his or her assessment of the faculty member in each area of evaluation. No explanation is provided as to how the Chair determines these numbers. Without presuming to dictate to how these decisions should be made, we believe that it is to the benefit of new faculty, in particular, to be provided with clarity and as much specificity as possible on the kinds of achievements and contributions that will result in productive and outstanding accomplishments and that all faculty will benefit from greater clarity in this important area.

Section 1.4.1.2, Faculty Evaluation Criteria

As currently written:

Each department shall provide written descriptions of any department-specific evaluation criteria to be considered in the evaluation of faculty members in that department.

*Departments are responsible for communicating in writing to faculty the types of department-specific activities that are considered, how different activities might be weighted in light of department or university goals, and examples of evidence that can be submitted. Whenever changes are made to these, departments are responsible for communicating such changes to faculty. Department-specific criteria for annual faculty evaluations must be consistent with any applicable accreditation requirements.*

(Lines in italics have either been modified or replaced. The opening sentence remains the same.)

Revision:

Each department shall provide written descriptions of any department-specific evaluation criteria to be considered in the annual evaluation of faculty members in that department. Faculty evaluations shall use criteria that reflect the standards and norms of appropriate academic disciplines, be consistent with any applicable accreditation requirements and reflect University standards. To achieve this, each department shall develop written criteria and/or rubrics reflecting the weights and types of acceptable evidence to be used in the evaluation of faculty in the areas of teaching, professional contributions, and university service. Department Chairs and School Directors should develop these criteria in cooperation with department and/or school personnel committees. Such criteria shall be distributed to faculty in writing and made available on a department or college web site. Finally, it is recommended that departments initiate periodic reviews of these criteria to determine that they remain consistent with professional and university expectations.