



MEMORANDUM

Faculty Welfare Committee

To: Faculty Senate President

From: The 2005-2006 Faculty Welfare Committee

Subject: Annual evaluations of tenure track faculty

In the course of a number of grievances we have heard this year it has come to our attention that the annual evaluation process for tenure track faculty has some problems. In particular, since the deadlines in the faculty handbook are virtually impossible for many faculty and chairs to make, there is no effective deadline, even though one is published. This situation puts us on very shaky legal and moral ground when uncomfortable decisions need to be made. Also there is some confusion about the interaction between the annual evaluations and the retention decisions, particularly in the case of first year faculty. Therefore we would like to suggest the following changes to the deadlines, as well as changes to the culture which will ensure that in general these new deadlines are met:

1. Change the deadline for chairs annual evaluations of faculty as follows:

March 15: Chairs self evaluations and evaluations of tenure track faculty who may be continuing or on leave for the following year due to the dean and available to the faculty evaluated. Faculty are required to acknowledge receipt of a copy of the evaluation by signing an original which the department retains. The signature does not indicate acceptance of the validity of the evaluation.

Rationale: With all of the registration processes and other preparation for term things that occur in January it is virtually impossible for chairs, particularly those in large departments to make the current February 1 deadline. In fact, in many departments faculty have not completed their self evaluations much before this (see additional recommendations below). On the other hand the evaluations should be completed early enough to allow for due process for faculty who are denied merit or have other issues with the evaluation. Also the process should not drag out the entire spring for chairs who have enough on their plates. Departmental culture and processes need to be adjusted so that chairs can complete evaluations in a timely fashion. The March 15 deadline avoids the likelihood of chairs spending spring break on evaluations.

In addition, this change makes clear that retention decisions are separate from the evaluation process. This also makes the load a little lighter on chairs with faculty who are

leaving for whatever reason, there is no necessity to evaluate someone for a merit raise for which they are not eligible.

Side note: In practice, meeting the deadline will be essential when the evaluation may be controversial (eg denying merit). Deans may choose to grant extensions, where necessary but should make it clear to chairs that extensions would only apply to uncontroversial evaluations.

Additional consequence: It would be necessary to amend promotion procedures so that faculty need not include the chair's evaluation for the most recent calendar year in promotion portfolios. Since chairs review promotion documents and write separate letters the committee did not feel that this would be a problem. In fact, the current procedure is a bit tricky since faculty do not have these evaluations as they are preparing their notebooks.

2. Include a deadline for faculty self evaluations due to the chairs.

February 1: Faculty self evaluations due to chairs.

Rationale: Earlier deadlines have faculty completing self evaluations when they have not yet received student feedback on fall courses, a later deadline would not give chairs adequate time for completing their evaluations. Chairs are, of course at liberty to grant extensions where merited as long as their own evaluations can be completed in a timely manner. Some school and department procedures may need to be adjusted (see below) to make this deadline realistic.

3. Include a deadline for the availability of materials for faculty self evaluations

January 10: All materials provided by the department, school or university which are required for faculty to complete self evaluations are available to faculty. (Examples of this include any required forms and student evaluations or summaries thereof)

Rationale: Among the reasons cited for late self evaluations were that faculty were supposed to summarize or respond to student evaluations but had not received them and that the form for self evaluations was being revised and was not available.