



UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE RECORD

Minutes of the Special Faculty Meeting on Performance Evaluation

October 28, 2002

The meeting was called to order at 5PM by Prof. Michael Payne. He reminded the faculty that it was important to have a recommendation for the Board of Trustees later this month. He also thanked the Performance Evaluation Task Force for its hard work.

Provost Steve Bowen introduced the members of the Task Force, which includes both elected and appointed faculty members, and both deans, as well as himself. Prof. Alison Draper then took the floor to present the report, the text of which was distributed in campus mail and with the agenda for this meeting.

Prof. Draper reviewed the history of recent attempts to change the merit system, noting that during the past calendar year, one plan was rejected by the Board of Trustees (the Peeler Amendment). As the current Task Force worked, the members presented and then retracted two possible plans, in an effort to accommodate the views of faculty as well as trustees. Whereas the trustees had favored an annual review cycle, they now are persuaded that three-year review cycle is acceptable.

Before turning to the report itself, Prof. Draper observed that balancing the recognition of accomplishment with the principle that all faculty should be treated alike is a difficult task. In the proposed system, teaching, scholarship, and service are evaluated separately with the weightings of 5, 4, and 2, which is identical to the system in place from 1998 to 2001. In order for the Deans to carry out even triennial reviews effectively, the materials submitted for review must be organized and brief. However, deficiencies in teaching occurring mid-cycle should not be allowed to persist for three years, and should be addressed. Teaching evaluations will be scanned by the department chair to catch problems early; asking all post-tenure faculty to submit these materials avoids having to single out some individuals. The timeline of review is similar to the 98-01 system, with appeals going to the Council of Deans.

Finally, Prof. Draper noted that the proposed system has no quotas for each review level. Criteria were slightly revised from older systems, and now includes service to one's profession. There will be an across-the-board (ATB) salary increment plus merit score increments, recommended each year by the Personnel Committee. Prof. Draper moved that the report be adopted, which was seconded.

Prof. Geoff Schneider wondered at the absence of the Kresl amendment to set the minimum annual ATB increment equal to the Consumer Price Index, which was adopted in 1998. Prof. Draper and Dean Genie Gerdes said that the Kresl provision was not included for several reasons: it had never been activated (and the people coming closest to needing it had been highly paid), the Personnel Committee in setting dollar amounts can guard against

anyone losing salary, and the inclusion of such a provision would increase the chance of its rejection by the Board of Trustees. Prof. Schneider moved that the following sentence be added to Section G of the report: *Every individual's salary increment arrived at through the Performance Evaluation System shall equal at least the CPI*; this was seconded.

The discussion of the amendment included attempts to clarify whether the Kresl amendment language was omitted primarily for principled or pragmatic reasons. Several faculty members were puzzled about why this statement, accepted in our 98-01 system, would now be unacceptable to our trustees. Prof. Paul Susman was also concerned that the 1/2 CPI ATB component was not even guaranteed by Section G of the report. Several members of the task force thought that trustees felt they were compromising on the annual-triennial review issue, and that adopting the amendment might result in the rejection of the current report and imposition of an annual review cycle by the trustees. The motion was put to a vote at that point, and it was defeated.

Prof. Helen Morris-Keitel brought up her concerns about Section I, the annual review of teaching evaluations by the chair, and moved that *Section I be deleted*, which was seconded. She questioned why tenured faculty need annual review of their teaching when untenured faculty are reviewed biennially. Also, tabulations of course evaluations can be problematical for large departments, if reports are due by the end of June. She also thought that severe teaching problems would be detected by other means. Prof. Draper and other members of the task force responded that the assumption was that few problems would emerge in this annual review and thus the review could be done quickly, chairs should review teaching evaluations frequently, and this was a nod in the direction of annual reviews, whose omission once again might imperil the whole report. Workload for staff in summarizing evaluations could be spread out over the year, although workload problems in particular departments would have to be looked at. Prof. Marj Kastner observed that putting the whole evaluation process on-line could lighten the workload.

Prof. Susman offered a friendly amendment to Prof. Morris-Keitel's motion, that *After the first post-tenure review cycle, annual teaching reviews would be done for people who received 1's or 2's in teaching in the previous cycle*. Discussion of this motion included the discomfort of singling certain people out for review vs. the advantages of catching any teaching problems as early as possible. Prof. Susman thought that quick reviews would not reveal subtle problems in which case chairs would end up doing thorough reviews to catch a small number of problems. The motion was then voted on, and it was defeated.

Continuing discussion of the report, several faculty members questioned the role of the deans in the review process. The Task Force pointed out that deans play both a developmental and evaluative role for faculty and should receive results of the annual teaching review. The fact that the Council of Deans hears any appeals is consistent with past practice, and helps insure uniformity of evaluation across the university. Another point of discussion was whether 3 years of teaching could be described in a 2-page document. Provost Bowen responded that concise files will help ensure a good quality review. The question was then moved and the vote to close debate passed. The motion to accept the report was carried, and the meeting adjourned at 6:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Halpern
Secretary of the Faculty