

MEMORANDUM

Date: November 9, 2010

To: Carola Wenk, Chair Faculty Senate
Members, Faculty Senate

From: Amy Jaspersen, Chair of Evaluations, Merit, Rewards and Workload Committee
Mark Leung, Member
Stephen A Temple, Member
Rolando Quintana, Member
F. Frank Chen, Member
Patricia McGee, Member
Jeffery von Ronne, Member
William Cooke, Member
Jon Thompson, Member
Jolyn Mikow, Member
Marian Aitches, Member
Cherylon Robinson, Member
Victor De Oliveira, Member
Zlatko Koinov, Member
Chris Reddick, Member
Rhonda Gonzalez, Member
Kirsten Gardner, Member
Thomas Coyle, Member

Re: Recommendation on Merit Policies

ITEM #1: Merit Guidelines

During May 2010, the Committee recommended and the Senate voted to adopt a defensive measure that prevented further use of the new policy applied in 2009 (for the 2008 academic year) that required faculty members to achieve a score of “good” or better in each category (teaching, research and service) in each of the preceding two years in order to qualify for merit. Previous policies had used a 2-year average across categories in order to be merit eligible.

Building upon this background, the Committee has voted to propose the following resolution:

Resolution #1 – Merit Eligibility

Every eligible tenured/tenure-track faculty member with a net evaluation score of 2.5 (Good) or better shall receive a merit adjustment on his/her FY 20XX academic rate. The net evaluation score is the weighted average (based on workload allocation) of all categories of teaching, research, and service for the evaluation year. Any individual rating of S or U in any one of the categories of teaching, research or service does not disqualify a faculty member from eligibility for merit.*

Note of intent: By using a net evaluation score and not parsing out individual categories, this should address concerns of faculty re: prior guidelines. This is the sentiment already expressed by the Provost during the May 2010 Senate meeting (see Minutes). Further, the intention of this resolution is that any rating in any one of the categories of teaching, research or service does not disqualify a faculty member from eligibility for merit. In the past, faculty members who earned an S in one category were disqualified from receiving any merit -- even if their overall net evaluation score was a 2.5 (Good)* or above. Faculty members who may be outstanding in one category but have a slow year in another should not be prevented from receiving merit if they meet the 2.5 (Good)* threshold overall. Further, members of this year's committee raised examples of some faculty having been given U ratings in one category (perhaps sometimes unjustly). Given that there is no effective mechanism to appeal such evaluations, we felt that the net evaluation score would allow a fair consideration of the overall performance record.

*Using the established performance scale: O=1; O-=1.25; VG+=1.5; VG=1.75; VG-=2; G+=2.35; G=2.5; G-=2.75; S+=3; S=3.25; S-=3.65; U=4.

ITEM #2: On-line Teaching Evaluations:

Over the summer, the on-line teaching evaluation instrument was pilot tested. On-line evaluations will be implemented for all courses starting in Fall 2010. Given that the test run during the summer had a 26% response rate and the previous IDEA survey instrument had a 48% response rate, this Committee urges caution when using the results from these surveys until they can get up to a 50% response rate (see September 9, 2010 Faculty Senate Minutes).

Therefore, the Committee has voted to propose the following resolution:

Resolution #2 – On-line Teaching Evaluations:

Although the results of the recently adopted online course survey instrument may provide individual faculty with important formative student feedback, the instrument is currently in a testing phase. Until the reliability of its results is confirmed, any attempt to use data resulting from it for summative evaluation must be done with prudence. Therefore, the data generated from the test phase instrument cannot be valued at a level less than "good" (2.5) for purposes of annual merit evaluation. Evaluation of a faculty member's overall annual teaching effectiveness should in all other ways comply with their department's established evaluation guidelines.

Note of intent: The intent is to implement a resolution that a) recognizes the importance of student feedback in the course evaluation process, and 2) cautions department chairs against using feedback from an instrument in the testing phases in a punitive way against faculty in an annual merit evaluation unless the data is meaningful.