

Approved Report to Faculty Senate
February 9, 2012

Evaluation, Merit, Rewards, and Workload Committee
Recommendations, Implications, and Revisions
“Proposed Annual Evaluation Process Model White Paper”

The Evaluation, Merit, and Workload Committee met December 6, 2011, January 20, and January 27 and in 5 task groups to propose revisions to the “Proposed Annual Evaluation Process Model White Paper” and make recommendations. To date, the committee has reviewed faculty feedback, collected department annual evaluation guidelines and college workload, and communicated with faculty who provided input to the white paper. Based upon themes evident in the faculty feedback and the committee consensus, the following elaborates areas of support, identifies areas of concern and implications, provides a rationale for revisions to the white paper, and proposes recommendations for the Faculty Senate’s approval.

Areas of Support

The Evaluation, Merit, Rewards, and Workload (EMRW) Committee support the following areas.

Standardized Scoring of Annual Evaluations and Formalized Workload Agreements. The Committee supports the implementation of a standardized process for reporting departmental faculty annual evaluation scores (specifically the use of a descending 5 point scale). As well, the committee supports the establishment of a written or formal workload agreement between the faculty member and chair delineating percent of responsibilities allocated to the three categories of teaching, research, and service. These standardized processes ensure “fair and rigorous annual faculty performance evaluations.”

Departmental Involvement and Approval. The Evaluation, Merit, Rewards, and Workload Committee strongly supports the White Paper’s attention to departmental involvement including departmental-level development and approval of annual evaluation guidelines, the development of guidelines and criteria that accommodate differences across and within departments, and the inclusion of a faculty committee in the annual evaluation process. The committee agrees that “The proposed model for annual reporting is heavily dependent on the departmental-level delineation of expectations for faculty contributions to the university’s instructional, research, and service missions.” The committee strongly supports that department-specific guidelines should be developed and “adopted by a vote of the department tenured and tenure-track faculty.”

Broad Areas of Concern and Committee Response

Based upon themes evident in the faculty feedback and committee consensus, broad areas of concern are highlighted including the EMRW's Committee's response are elaborated.

Policy Changes and Implications: The committee acknowledge that annual performance evaluation process, reporting, and scoring is connected to many other policies that delineate it's use (e.g. allocation of merit pay, remediation of faculty performance, periodic performance reviews, tenure and promotions, and termination). Many faculty voiced concerns about the changes to policy within the white paper and the proposal's consistency in relation to current HOP policies including criteria for merit pay allocation HOP 2.11, weighting of student evaluations (HOP 2.12), and a new Voluntary Faculty Development Plan (HOP 2.11). Faculty feedback and the committee agree that policy changes are beyond the scope and purpose of the white paper and are best addressed separately. The EMRW Committee recommends that these policies be addressed separately.

In particular, the majority of faculty feedback voiced concerns about the Faculty Feedback Plan (FDP) including the implications for termination, third-year review, PPE, tenure, and promotion as well as the voluntary nature of the plan. Based upon faculty feedback and committee consensus, the EMRW Committee opposes implementing the "Voluntary Faculty Development Plan" or similar policy on an annual basis. It is recommended that the Voluntary Faculty Development Plan be omitted from the Whitepaper. Revisions were made that emphasize that there will be no recourse for electing or not electing to implement a FDP, not implementing FDP recommendations or completing them according to the established time-line. Furthermore, the committee recommends that the document should be consistent with evolving UT System Board of Regents Rules and Regulations.

Developmental-Specific Benchmarks for Faculty in an "Emerging" Tier I Institution. As an outcome of our work, the committee concluded that becoming a Tier 1 faculty member is a developmental process that requires ongoing faculty development and increasing levels of faculty contributions as well as additional supports beyond the annual evaluation report and it's uses. Therefore the committee is recommending that the Faculty Senate establish a process to identify "developmental stage-specific" benchmarks for faculty in an emergent Tier 1 institution in relation to faculty contributions and performance expectations for teaching, research, scholarship, and creative activities, and service and the requisite additional institutional supports that enhance faculty contributions, optimal performance, and development and build upon the strengths, expertise, and potentials of faculty members who are new to UTSA as well as those who were hired prior to UTSA's Tier 1 aspirations.

Best Practices for Annual Evaluation Reports. The committee recognized the challenge of creating one generic annual performance evaluation model and guidelines given a limited time-frame in which to respond to the white paper. Given the differences across and within

departments, the committee confirmed the need to identify annual evaluation report best practices specific to various disciplines and departments. Thus, the committee will continue reviewing department annual evaluation guidelines to identify best practices for annual performance evaluations.

Summary of Major Revisions to the White paper

The following summarizes the major revisions to the White Paper including the committee's rationale.

Clarification of Purpose of Whitepaper and the Evaluation Process. Faculty noted that the purpose of the white paper and evaluation process are woven throughout the document and recommended reorganization of the white paper and the inclusion of a stated purpose at the beginning of the document. A section stating the purpose of the proposal was inserted: "This proposed Annual Report Model was developed to standardize how departmental faculty annual evaluation scores are reported to the Deans and the Provost by department Chair (specifically the use of a descending 5 point scale)." Revisions including reorganizing and combining content.

Flexible, Adaptable, and Individualized Annual Evaluation Reporting. Faculty feedback and committee deliberations emphasized that annual evaluation guidelines should be flexible and adaptable to accommodate differences across and within departments as well as developed and approved at the department level. Thus, the section, "The "Proposed Guidelines for Assessment Criteria by Category," was renamed "Model Annual Evaluation Report" and moved to Appendix I. The revised "Model Annual Evaluation Report" describes possible evaluation elements (dimensions, items/tools, and metrics). It is expected the evaluation elements will be adapted, augmented, and approved by each department. An additional dimension for teaching was added to include instructional innovation, development, and improvement.

Burdensome and Time Consuming Documentation Requirements. Faculty voiced concerns about the required documentation being overly burdensome and time consuming (e.g. requiring teaching portfolios and detailed service documentation). Thus, reference to teaching portfolios and specific types of documentations were omitted. Documentation requirements will be determined by each department.

Prescriptive and Weighted Dimensions for Each Category with Uneven Detail. The majority of faculty reported concerns about the Whitepaper's elaboration of dimensions for each category (teaching, RSC, and service), use of weighted scores for dimensions and items, and the varying level of detail across the three categories. Revisions were made so the only weighted

score is the overall average performance evaluation score. It is based upon the average scores for each category and the percent allocated to the category per the annual workload agreement.

Difficult to Score and Operationalize Rubrics. Many noted concerns about the two rubrics (overall average annual performance evaluation and service quality and quantity) being unclear and difficult to score and operationalize. The revised annual evaluation score rubric incorporated language from UT System Rules and Regulations and assigned score ranges for outstanding, very good, good, satisfactory, and unsatisfactory. Based upon strong faculty consensus, the service rubric was omitted and revised. The revised service assessment criteria evaluate quantity and quality of service activities using three elements (leadership, impact and contribution, and effort).

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Recommendations for Faculty Senate Approval
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The Evaluation, Merit, Rewards, and Workload Committee requests Faculty Senate to approve the following.

1. The Faculty Senate accepts the EMRW Committee Report and Revised Whitepaper and recommends that they be sent forward to Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs Frederick and Vice Provost of Academic Affairs Jesse Zapata.
2. The Faculty Senate will establish a process to identify “developmental stage-specific” benchmarks for faculty in an emergent Tier 1 institution in relation to:
 - a. requisite additional institutional supports that enhance faculty contributions, optimal performance, and development and build upon the strengths, expertise, and potentials of faculty members who are new to UTSA as well as those who were hired prior to UTSA’s Tier 1 aspirations.
3. The Faculty Senate approves the EMRW Committee’s plan to address the implications of the Whitepaper’s suggested policy changes [e.g. Merit Pay Allocation (HOP 2.11, weighting of student evaluations (HOP 2.12), Voluntary Faculty Development Plan (HOP 2.11)] separately.