On the Future Role of the Departmental PAC in Faculty Merit Evaluations

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Preamble

• Dean suggested that we examine UNT Policy 13-9 with regard to the new role PACs will play in faculty evaluations.
• We examine how other Universities deal with merit evaluation of faculty and how PAC-like committees provide input to the Chairs/Heads.

UNT Policy 13-9

“In matters such as the supervision of personnel within an administrative unit and matters involving decision-making responsibility for work assignment, evaluation, disciplinary actions, allocation of resources (including, but not limited to, space, graduate assistantships, support for travel, support for research projects, etc.), authority rests with the individual administrator who is held accountable. However, decisions on many such matters are normally made after consultation with the faculty.”

Methodology

1. Browse the web pages of UNT peers
   i. 5 of 14 “peer institutions”
   ii. 2 of 6 “Texas comparison universities”
   iii. 4 of 4 “emerging research universities”
2. Ask (a biased selection of) faculty from other institutions about their policy
   i. 2 from response to broadcast on FaceBook
3. Emailed chairs of 2 departments of interest

Peer Institutions

Peer Institutions
- Bowling Green State University
- Florida Atlantic University - Boca Raton
- Florida International University
- Kent State University
- George Mason University
- Georgia State University
- New Mexico State - Main Campus
- Northern Arizona University
- Northern Illinois University
- University of Alabama
- University of Central Florida
- University of Memphis
- University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
- Western Michigan University

Emerging Research Institutions

Chosen by Coordinating Board:
- University of New Mexico
- University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Chosen by UNT:
- Florida International University
- University of Central Florida
The Numbers

- 5 “peer institutions”
- 2 “Texas comparison universities”
- 4 “emerging research universities”

= 8 institutions in total
(not 11, by the principle of inclusion-exclusion)

Summary – Peer Institutions

- An examination of faculty merit review policies at 8 peer institutions reveals that merit evaluations are most often done by the chair with no input from the faculty (6 of 8 institutions).
- The policy at the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee mandates the reverse: evaluations are done by a committee with no input from the chair.
- The University of New Mexico policy allows shared governance in that evaluations “may be performed by the chair or the chair and a committee of tenured faculty”.

Non-Peer 1: RIT

- In the CS department at the Rochester Institute of Technology the department chair is the one who officially writes the faculty evaluation, but he does so by obtaining input from a sampling of the CS faculty (at least 3 faculty are queried for each faculty evaluation).
- The chair makes the assignments and every faculty member is responsible for evaluating at least 3 of his/her peers.
- These evaluations are single-blind (i.e. the faculty member being evaluated does not know who is evaluating him/her).
- The chair takes the input, summarizes it, and then writes a formal evaluation that gets sent to the Dean.

Non-Peer 2: UVic

The University of Victoria (Canada) College of Engineering policy states (under the heading Annual Salary Review): “The chair of department has responsibility for the initial salary recommendation for faculty members in his or her department. A department may elect to form a committee to assist the chair in reaching his or her recommendations. The dean has responsibility for the salary recommendations submitted to the vice president academic for all faculty members including the department chairs and the associate deans.”

Remaining Questions

- Two universities appear to follow a similar model, with the chair receiving input from a faculty committee
  - University of New Mexico (peer)
  - University of Victoria (non-peer)
- How is this done exactly?
- I emailed both Chairs
- One chair responded (UVic) and provided information from McGill also

Summary, McGill University

- ECE uses an elected committee
- CS also, with representation from all ranks
- The CS chair “combined their advice”, “with considerable input and advice to back up the recommendation”
- Downside: The same people were elected each year
Summary, UVic

- UVic CS faculty are “a very democratic and argumentative group by tradition”
- No elections: All faculty cycle through the committee
- Upsides:
  - The Dean likes it
  - Works well for topmost and bottommost faculty
- Downsides
  - High variance for midrange faculty

Summary, UVic

- In the second year of implementation, it seems to be working
- “It serves to bring more colleagues into an awareness of “how things work”, break down clique structures, insider groups, outsider groups, etc.”
- UVic CS has 35 faculty to evaluate