

**The
U.M.K.C.
Faculty
Senate**

Report

The Voice of the U.M.K.C. Faculty

October 17, 2000

Note: Though faculty members were invited to attend this discussion, only Senators came. Hopefully that is because there was confidence the Senate could deal with the issue. The meeting was good, though great new arguments weren't developed. The consensus view seems to be that the proposed policy is a good one, and that it is far better than the one is currently in place.

POST-TENURE REVIEW REVIEWED

Professor Teresa Thiel, Chaired of the post-tenure review committee, and Vice-President Lehmkuhle attended the Senate. They said creation of post-tenure review policies was a political necessity, though not an emergency, and that if the University didn't create its own policy President Pacheco feared one would be imposed from above. Our own policy would be more flexible and sensitive to University needs. The committee wanted a process that was remedial and developmental rather than punitive. It also wanted to make the normal review something that didn't impose onerous paperwork burdens.

There are three steps in the proposed review process: a review phase, a development phase for those who need it and, if necessary, a process of dismissal. The review process would cover 5 years. If a chair thought a faculty member's performance was adequate that would end the process. If s/he thought the performance was unsatisfactory that evaluation would be sent to the "appropriate established committee" of the department (normally the Promotion and Tenure Committee). If that committee judged the performance to be satisfactory the process would end. If not

a plan for professional development will be written. The plan will be developed by the faculty member, the department/unit committee..., a mutually agreed upon mediator from outside the department (selected from the campus faculty grievance panel), and the chair of the department/unit. This redevelopment plan will have clear and attainable objectives for the faculty member.... This plan will be signed by the faculty member, the chair... and the mediator. The development plan and any associated resource commitments will be reviewed and approved by the Dean. (See the whole document at http://www.system.missouri.edu/vpacad/faculty/ptr/review_plan.htm)

There would be an annual evaluation of progress under the development plan. At the end of three years progress could be considered satisfactory, or the professor could be given two more years, or the process for dismissal for cause could be started. The first reviews would come in 2007.

Senate Chair Ed Mills (Education) with Profs. Steve Krantz (Nursing) and Linda Voigts (English) were the campus members of the committee that developed the plan. They all think that it is both a good plan and that it is better than current policy.

Presently administrators can start a termination process after only one year of what they deem to be unsatisfactory performance. The policy offers few protections for faculty, and was punitive rather than developmental. Its only saving grace is that it isn't used.

Several issues were raised in the discussion:

- ❖ The plan kicked in only if a faculty member's performance was "unsatisfactory." What did that word mean? Theil said the criteria for satisfactory performance could not be explicitly spelled out. There was too much variation in jobs and needs. It would have to remain in the hands of the faculty and chairs of the different units to spell out the term.
- ❖ Some objected that the proposed plan puts too much power in the hands of chairs, since they initiate and frame the process. They wanted the process to be initiated by faculty. The committee members and Theil argued that the chair could only make recommendations to a faculty committee.
- ❖ Of the 2,000 or so faculty members in the UM system, only 20 or 25 people hadn't received a merit raise in the past 5 years. If that measure of unsatisfactory performance was used this process would affect few people. However, since the thrust of the new plan was developmental rather than punitive, more people might go through the process. It might include, for example, all of those who consistently got below average pay increases.
- ❖ There seemed to be an assumption that the faculty wasn't doing its job. Why was this plan needed? Answer: the plan was needed for political reasons. Also it was a good proposal and better than current policy.
- ❖ From where would support \$\$ for the developmental part of the plan come? Would the unit need to supply funds for the needed development plan? The answer isn't clear, but presumably would vary on a case by case basis, and would be included in negotiations. The development plan had to have "clear and attainable objectives for the faculty member." That meant that expensive, non-funded, programs wouldn't be satisfactory and wouldn't be agreed to.
- ❖ There were some objections that the proposed plan made it too hard to get rid of non-performing faculty members. Also the plan would be ineffective if the chair wanted to protect an under-performing faculty member. Thiel and the UMKC committee members agreed that this was true, but said that you couldn't make it easy to get rid of people and protect tenure at the same time. In case of clear non-performance of duty (like not teaching classes) or harassment the current dismissal policies and processes would apply.
- ❖ Another question along this line was about funding. If a unit decided to get rid of a faculty member would they keep the funds? Answer: not necessarily. That would need to be negotiated on the campus.
- ❖ Yearly reviews would be grouped together for the five year review, but the context would change. One rating of poor or marginal performance wasn't significant, since anyone could have a bad year. But in a context of 4 other unsatisfactory reviews it would assume a different meaning.
- ❖ In some units the Dean appointed the faculty committees, including the tenure committees. The committee responded that this was a violation of university rules, and faculty ought to appoint its own committee.

- ❖ Had the plan been submitted to the AAUP for an evaluation? Not yet, but the committee intend to do so.
- ❖ Would Pacheco, the University lawyers or the Board significantly change the plan after it was submitted? Answer: Who knows? The faculty could only submit what it thought was a good plan. There was guarded optimism that the plan would be accepted as written.

Ph.D. Executive Committee: The Senate discussed the structure of the Ph.D. Executive committee though, since the issue is currently being examined by the Academic Affairs Committee, no formal resolution was proposed. Some Senators said the Ph.D. Executive Committee was an academic committee and should be chaired by a faculty member. Currently, too much time is spent on issues that are of primary importance to the administration. A long time was often spent discussing trivia, and important issues were placed at the end of the Agenda and weren't reached. Many issues were placed on summer Agendas when faculty were away. Additionally there were two committees -- the Ph.D. Executive Committee and the Graduate Council -- and the link between them tended to be the administrative chairs of the committees. The entire structure of the graduate program, some argued, needed to be re-examined.

IFC Report: The administration is willing to consider fee waivers for faculty families, but it is not sure that it will get through the Board. Specifically a faculty member might be able to transfer their own waiver to a family member. Since this might attract new students to the University, and would help in retaining bright students, it might not cost the school money. If it did lower income the general salary pool might need to be slightly decreased. Were faculty members willing to do this?... A change in the Thomas Jefferson Award is being discussed. Currently it is an annual award of \$10,000. The IFC is discussing a change to a biennial award with a \$17,000 stipend. Winners would also get the title of Thomas Jefferson Professor. Pacheco is a federalist, and believes that the four different campuses need a fair amount of freedom in setting their own rules.... If you have had problems with PeopleSoft call IFC Reps Max Skidmore or Jakob Waterborg.

Odds & Ends: UMSL posts administrator evaluations as a series of graphs.¹ Should we do the same? The issue will be discussed.... Medical premiums were going up. Perhaps the Faculty Sharesdollars should be used to offset the higher premiums.... The age discrimination information has been requested... The Senate Report of Oct. 3 was approved. This Report is not yet officially approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Harris Mirkin,
Faculty Secretary

¹ See <http://www.umsl.edu/~fcouncil/AdmEval/evaluate.html> and <http://www.umsl.edu/~fcouncil/AdmEval/Eval2000/FCadmPosting.html>