

Policy on Evaluation of Department Chairs and Faculty

Chair Evaluation. Each school will put in place an evaluation process for department chairs and, modified as needed, for heads of divisions or sections of departments, heads of divisions of schools, and academic directors in schools where that title is used. A plan detailing the process for chair evaluation, and metrics of excellence to gauge progress toward academic goals,* should be drawn up by each school's dean, working with department chairs and faculty (through the elected faculty council or other committee as appropriate) and submitted by the dean for approval by the Provost. The Provost may from time to time change the plan or these guidelines, or authorize exceptions to them, as he deems appropriate.

Purpose. The purpose of chair evaluation is to support chairs in their fundamental roles of helping faculty members flourish academically and leading their academic program to achieve high quality. The school's plan should emphasize leadership development and improvement, safeguard academic freedom, and be consistent with University policies. Training and development programs for department chairs are offered by the Committee on Academic Leadership Development; all deans are expected to encourage chairs to participate.

The faculty role in the appointment and re-appointment of department and division heads is set out in the Faculty Handbook, § 2-1 (C). The President appoints and determines the term of office of chairs. Whatever the expected length of service, a review process should be conducted (or the Provost's special permission obtained) before any individual serves more than five years as department chair (seven years in the Keck School of Medicine and the School of Dentistry). When the expected term is five or more years, there may also be an abbreviated mid-term process for faculty feedback.

Faculty committee. For each school or department, or division, or other appropriate unit, there will be a faculty academic consultative committee (by whatever name), which will be responsible for chair evaluation and may have other designated functions which further the unit's academic goals. We have experience with widely differing practices for selecting committees to consult on important academic matters. In some schools, the tenured and tenure-track faculty have annually elected committees; other schools have different practices. A school's plan may provide for members appointed by the dean, and may include faculty external to the unit. If it fits the circumstances of the school, chair evaluation may be conducted as part of the periodic Academic Program Review of the unit. Each school's plan will detail how its evaluation will be conducted and its committees selected. Committees should consist of faculty (preferably tenured) who are respected by their colleagues as productive scholars as well as fine teachers. The committees should make the most effective use of the limited time of these busy individuals.

Method of evaluation. The school plan will generally provide that the first part of chair review is enunciation of the role of chair. Chair review will include self-evaluation by the chair, in periodic and

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Provost and Senior Vice President, Academic Affairs

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end-of-term assessments of the unit's achievements and opportunities to improve, reported to the department faculty and the dean. Each chair review process will also include opportunity for feedback from all departmental faculty, collected in a way that preserves anonymity. All participants in a review must always be asked to provide written comments and suggestions for improvement. Generalizations or ratings are of limited use; if they are collected, they must be supported by examples and explanations. The Provost's office can offer consultant services in developing feedback instruments appropriate to the academic goals of the unit.**

Outcomes. The committee report will be transmitted first to the person evaluated, so that he or she may respond, adding comments and plans for action; both the report and the response will then be transmitted to the dean.

Evaluation may highlight changes in the department's needs or even its definition, or lead a dean to formulate with the chair an individualized plan for skills development, to be reevaluated annually. The dean will consider also data from the evaluation, along with other data, as relevant to decisions on administrative stipends and re-appointment. Whether or not there has been an evaluation, the President and the dean each retain the authority to decide, in his or her sole discretion, and with or without cause, to terminate at any time the administrative appointment of a department chair, head of division or section of a department, head of division of a school, or academic director.

After three years the Academic Senate Executive Board and Provost will assess the review process to see whether reviews have occurred on schedule, and are useful enough to be worth the effort.

Faculty Evaluation. Each school's dean will work with his or her faculty (through the elected faculty council or other committee as appropriate) to revise or create a plan for the faculty merit review system, which the dean will submit for approval by the Provost's office. The Provost may from time to time change the review plan or these guidelines, or authorize exceptions to them, as he deems appropriate.

Purposes. The central goal of the evaluation process is to encourage and reward outstanding performance by faculty designed to place the department and USC on the very top rung of American universities. The process should emphasize guidance and assistance, and make use of development programs sponsored by the Center for Excellence in Teaching and the Committee on Academic Leadership Development. It must safeguard academic freedom and be consistent with University policies. Reviews should look to the future as well as the past, as an individual's focus may evolve over time. Everyone can benefit from suggestions for improvement, periodic taking stock of accomplishments, and reflection on current and future directions in the light of departmental challenges.

Faculty committee. In each school, or department, or division, or other appropriate unit, there will be a faculty academic consultative committee (by whatever name) which will be responsible

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for faculty merit review, and may have other designated functions which further the unit's academic goals. We have experience with widely differing practices for selecting committees to consult on important academic matters. In some schools, the tenured and tenure-track faculty have annually elected committees. Other schools have different practices. A school's plan may provide for members appointed by the dean, and may include faculty external to the unit. Each school's plan will detail how its committees will be selected. Committees should consist of faculty (preferably tenured) who are respected by their colleagues as productive scholars as well as fine teachers. The committees should make the most effective use of the limited time of these busy individuals.

Faculty responsibilities. The school's faculty review plan will describe the method and criteria used to evaluate faculty performance, along with usual and alternative expectations.*** Baseline faculty responsibilities are set out in the faculty contract and the Faculty Handbook, § 3-2 (C). Faculty are expected to teach courses and perform service assigned to them by the department chair, after consultation with department faculty, on the basis of departmental, school and University needs. The most common profile will be 35-45% each for teaching and research, and 5-15% for service and other duties appropriate to the school's mission, though probationary faculty should have minimal service responsibilities and a higher research expectation. There will be variation among schools and departments in the quantity of teaching required to meet the usual teaching responsibilities, and the definition of the research expectation, which in many departments includes the ongoing submission of research proposals of appropriate magnitude which earn high ratings in national peer review processes.

Individual expectations and goals are established in annual meetings of the faculty member and the department chair or dean, leading to an activity profile allocating the individual's efforts for the year ahead, consistent with the needs of the department, school, and University. If the individual has been performing more or less teaching, research, or service than is typical in the school, the chair, after consultation, may adjust the profile so that the total effort amounts to full-time service. The possibility of variation in the profile provides a concrete recognition that faculty often can better serve the university and themselves if flexibility in focus is allowed over the course of a career. The performance of the faculty member is reviewed in accord with the individual profile. Thus, those who carry heavier than usual teaching responsibilities and are highly effective teachers will be recognized for their contribution, while those with a larger than usual research allocation will be recognized if they produce scholarship of a quality and volume appropriate to that effort.

Methods of evaluating teaching and scholarship. Every faculty member will submit an annual report, in a format determined by the school, summarizing activities and accomplishments in teaching, scholarship and service; proposing an activity profile consistent with the needs and goals of the department, school and University; discussing future plans and goals; and including a current CV and complete list of publications. The faculty consultative committee will take into account each individual faculty member's annual reports since the last review, as well as overall achievements and stature in the field. Departments may use different forms of evaluation, and different ways of communicating the

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evaluation to the faculty member. The committee will take special care to evaluate work which is interdisciplinary, furthers one of the strategic initiatives or critical pathways of the University's Strategic Plan, or involves international activities.

The method of reviewing scholarship and publications should be made clear in the school's review plan. The focus of the inquiry should be excellence and creativity and whether the individual has brought new insights, and has made or is likely to make a real impact. In some fields, a sine qua non for satisfactory research achievement is the ongoing submission of research proposals of appropriate magnitude which earn high ratings in national peer review processes.

The method of evaluating the individual's teaching should also be clearly stated in the school review plan. A program of regular collegial classroom observations is preferable, annually for probationary faculty and periodically for all other faculty, that includes discussions with the instructor before and after each visit, forward-looking advice, and a written record of the observations. The chair will consult with the faculty member on selection of observers. Student surveys should seek a 100% participation rate (e.g. collecting evaluation forms before distributing exam questions) and be analyzed in comparison to departmental and school baselines. Teaching includes preparing course syllabi and new courses, and instruction outside the classroom, e.g., mentoring, counseling, and thesis supervision of all types.

Rating and reports. We have experience with widely differing evaluation practices: some departments rate accomplishments on a scale; some divide faculty into equal-sized groups; some use an evaluation formula, assigning a different number of points for different activities; some use a narrative. At least one school uses mutual rating of all faculty by all faculty, a process whose results should in the future be reviewed by the faculty consultative committee. Each school may propose the methods it thinks best, but all processes must meet the following standards:

- All assessment must combine qualitative assessment with the use and report of hard data.
- The scale of evaluations must have at least five levels of performance, and must use additional levels if otherwise more than half of a unit's members would be given the same rating. Even if all members of a department are outstanding, it is possible to recognize and reward degrees of excellence.
- Each department's evaluations must yield a spectrum of distribution. If more than half of a unit's members are given the same rating, or if a narrative format obscures the ratings and their distribution along a spectrum, the dean may not accept the report and will give the committee the opportunity to re-do it making use of additional categories if necessary.
- The highest rating must be reserved for work meeting the highest aspirations of the school

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and the department, which should be calibrated to national standards through measurable indicia. (E.g., publication in the top journals in the field, of a quality and at a rate of productivity which would be outstanding even in the top [5]-[15] departments in the field. A department may devise other ways to state the teaching and scholarly standards to which it aspires.)

In comparing evaluations, the dean will have in mind that some departments have higher aspirations than others.

Procedures and procedural fairness. Individuals may see their evaluations in writing (at their request or if the school's plan so provides routinely), will discuss them with the chair or dean, and may respond in writing. If the evaluation is provided in writing, the individual will sign a copy. The school's plan will provide information on when and how appeals may be filed. If the individual appeals or the dean otherwise determines it to be justified, the chair, the dean, or both, will review evaluations and may revise them. The dean has the ultimate responsibility to determine faculty merit evaluation, because he or she is responsible under the University bylaws for the proper conduct of the school's educational program and has the duty to look after the academic welfare of the students of the school. Evaluations seen by the individual, and responses, will be placed in the individual's personnel file.

Timing. Non-tenure-track full-time faculty will be reviewed at least triennially. The school's plan will provide either annual or triennial reviews for tenured faculty, but annual reviews will be conducted at the request of either the individual or the dean. As mentioned above, reviews will take into account each individual faculty member's annual reports since the last review, as well as overall achievements and stature in the field. Tenure-track (probationary) faculty will be reviewed annually and will receive a full review and report midway in the probationary period. Chairs and senior colleagues should keep in mind the importance of providing probationary faculty with ongoing mentoring and annual constructive feedback on progress toward tenure.

Outcomes of evaluation. Evaluation may reveal opportunities for collaboration; the need for research leaves, financial or other support from the department, or a period of reduced teaching load or service responsibilities; or highlight changes in the department's needs or even its definition.

Merit raises start with peer merit review, following these evaluation guidelines, unless the Provost has approved an exception. In determining merit raises, as a first approximation the dean may use a department chair's recommendation or a formula that links a given merit rating to a given raise percentage or amount. After this first step, the Provost requires each dean to consider carefully what adjustments are called for in those figures to make sure that the relative salary levels reflect the ordering of the school's faculty by performance and stature, and to take account of equity, the competitive situation, promotions in rank, and the school's budget situation. Subject to these principles and to the school's budget situation, the dean should attempt to provide for all faculty (other than those whose

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work is not satisfactory) some salary increase, with meaningful differences between the highest and lowest increases, based on merit and achievements. The final salary recommendation is the personal responsibility of the dean and a vital instrument of his or her academic leadership. Authority to approve or revise the recommended salary lies with the Provost.

The faculty consultative committee may identify any individual whose work is demonstrably not satisfactory, subject to the dean's review after considering the individual's response. A faculty member so identified must meet with the dean to formulate an individualized development plan, must carry out the plan, and will be reevaluated annually. Four consecutive evaluations by the faculty consultative committee as not satisfactory would strongly suggest serious neglect of duty or incompetence, constituting grounds for dismissal for cause. Whether or not there have been such evaluations, the dean at all times retains the responsibility described in the Faculty Handbook under the criteria and process set out there, to decide to commence the five-step process potentially leading to termination of a tenured or multi-year appointment, as well as the responsibility to decide on re-appointment or non-reappointment of faculty on term contracts.

*Some chairs, particularly in the Keck School of Medicine, also have budgetary responsibilities, so that they should be evaluated in regard to a wide set of goals like those of deans. ([See the appendix](#))

** A possible survey instrument based on the report of the Provost's and Academic Senate's Joint Sub-committee is set out in an appendix.

*** The report of the Provost's and Academic Senate's Joint Sub-committee makes detailed suggestions.

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APPENDIX

A POSSIBLE FACULTY SURVEY INSTRUMENT CONCERNING CHAIRS

As an example, following is an illustration of a survey instrument, instructions, and possible role definition for medical school department chairs and division heads, which could be adapted for use in any other school. This example is based on the report of the Provost's and Academic Senate's Joint Sub-Committee, which in turn based its role definition in large part on language developed in a draft report of the School of Medicine Governance Document Committee.

* * * * *

TO ALL FACULTY OF THE DEPARTMENT:

As part of the University's regular process, we are surveying faculty for feedback on the functioning of the department chair [and division head.] Set out below is one description of the role of a leader [in academic medicine.] After reading this role description:

- (1) If you have suggestions for the chair [and head] on how they could better contribute to the unit's excellence, please send your comments. For example, you might suggest that the unit would be better served if more or less weight were placed on one of these functions. Or you may have suggestions on how better to achieve one of these functions. You may also have suggestions that go outside this role description, or you may have comments on functions that have been particularly well carried out.
- (2) Please include examples and explanations for all your suggestions.
- (3) Whether your comments are lengthy or brief (or you just want to say "generally satisfied") PLEASE RESPOND TO THIS SURVEY either by e-mail [to xxxxxxxx], by comments on this form, by signed note, or by using the enclosed anonymous two-envelope system, to the [department's] [faculty academic consultative] committee, by [date].

The committee will summarize all the responses, preserving anonymity when requested, and will forward the summary to the academic leader being reviewed and the dean.

ROLE DESCRIPTION: The central mission of the leader [in academic medicine] is promoting the academic excellence of the unit; maintaining standards of excellence in teaching, scholarship,

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[patient care] and university [and community] service, [while insuring fiscal integrity.] The department chair [and division head] are responsible for all of these functions:

- developing and maintaining outstanding educational programs [for medical students, graduate students and postdoctoral trainees];
- recruiting and retaining a faculty that excels in educational,[and] research [and clinical] endeavors;
- providing an environment that encourages scholarly activity;
- [managing and building the clinical organization so that it can compete in the current healthcare environment, while insuring USC's mission to providing outstanding medical care to underserved Los Angeles County populations;]
- operating the department effectively both with regard to its internal organization and its relationship with the school and University as a whole;
- adequately informing, seeking advice from, and representing the interests of the unit's faculty;
- [prudently, fairly and effectively managing the income and expenditure of the unit;]
and
- respecting academic freedom.

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MEMORANDUM

To: Academic Deans

From: Lloyd Armstrong, Jr.

Date: August 17, 2000

Subject: Evaluation of Department Chairs and Faculty (revised)

Enclosed is a revised version of the guidelines I issued last May. The only change is an additional clarifying sentence on page 2 reiterating existing policy that administrative assignments may be ended at any time. For convenience, I repeat below my transmittal memo of May 8, 2000.

These guidelines are a result of several years of wide consultation, beginning with the 1997 Academic Senate white papers on Faculty Accountability and on Leadership Accountability, and the policy on Faculty Responsibilities published as section 3-2(C) of the 1998 Faculty Handbook.

The provisions are based on the reports of the Provost's and Academic Senate's Joint Sub-committees for the Review of Faculty and the Review of Deans and Department Chairs. I met with the Senate and the Provost's Council to discuss a draft of this document, and received many rounds of helpful suggestions from the Senate leadership, other faculty, chairs and deans.

Almost all of the suggestions have been incorporated, but on some points different schools have contradictory traditions and expectations. Each school will have the opportunity to develop its own plan to implement these guidelines, as spelled out in the attached document.

You should promptly begin to draw up school-specific evaluation plans, working with faculty and department chairs, for submission to me in time to put evaluation processes in place for the 2000-2001 academic year.

Enclosure

cc: William Dutton

USC

UNIVERSITY
OF SOUTHERN
CALIFORNIA

MEMORANDUM

To: Academic Deans

Office of the Provost

From: Lloyd Armstrong *ld*

Lloyd Armstrong, Jr.
Provost

Date: March 12, 2003

Subject: Evaluation of Department Chairs

I write to remind you that the Policy on Evaluation of Department Chairs and Faculty distributed with my memo of August 17, 2000, asked each of you to work with your department chairs and faculty to prepare a school plan for evaluation of department chairs (and, modified as needed, heads of department sections and school divisions). The policy informed you that a review process should be conducted (or special permission obtained for an exception) before any individual serves more than five years as department chair (seven years in the Keck School of Medicine and the School of Dentistry.) For your reference, the University-wide policy is at <http://www.usc.edu/policies>.

The Policy also stated that "After three years the Academic Senate Executive Board and Provost will assess the review process to see whether reviews have occurred on schedule, and are useful enough to be worth the effort." As we approach that three year mark, I ask that the dean of each school with department or division heads prepare for that assessment by checking whether your school has a plan you are satisfied with, and whether all chairs serving more than five (or seven) years have been reviewed.

The Senate Executive Board and I will be contacting you shortly as part of the follow-up assessment of whether the reviews were of value to you and the school, and useful enough to justify the effort required to conduct them.

cc: Deans of Faculty Council
Philippa Levine