Office of the Vice-President, Academic & Provost

To: All Regular Faculty  
   Daily Bulletin

From: Feridun Hamdullahpur, Vice-President Academic & Provost  
      George Freeman, President, Faculty Association

Copy: Faculty Deans  
      Department Heads

Re: Faculty Annual Performance Appraisal Process Recommendations

Date: June 1, 2010

The Faculty Relations Committee has reached agreement on how to proceed with the recommendations of the Review of the Faculty Annual Performance Evaluation Process conducted by a working group jointly appointed by the University and the FAUW, which was released last year. Nearly all the recommendations of that report are to be implemented now, for use in the reviews in or around January 2011 of performance in 2010. The complete Review document can be found at:  
http://provost.uwaterloo.ca/Memos/Report_FacPerfEvaluationWorkingGroup_Apr%202009.pdf

We attach the Review’s list of recommendations to this memo. Those without an asterisk are the ones accepted by FRC without revision from the Review. Those with a single asterisk have been modified somewhat by FRC from those in the original report. The two marked with a double asterisk have been set aside for further discussion.

Certain recommendations (for instance 2.1, 2.2, and 4.3) require some further work by the bodies responsible for implementing them (Deans’ Council, Faculty Relations Committee). However, many of the recommendations that must be executed at the departmental level are ready for immediate action. We urge you to set to work on these as soon as is practically possible. We note in particular Recommendation 1.8, which adds the possibility of scores of 0.75 and 0.25. Although this recommendation requires a change to the M of A that has not yet happened, chairs should proceed as though that change will be made.

For your convenience, we note the following changes made by FRC to the recommendations in the Review document, which seem to us the most significant ones as departments and Chairs set out to implement these recommendations. Please read these together with the full list of Review recommendations.

1. Recommendation 1.2: Provision is now made for smaller departments (departments consisting of fewer than 15 members) to decide whether they will strike a performance evaluation committee advisory to the chair.

2. Recommendation 1.3: Language has been added to specify a timeline for updates to the departmental documents that outline performance expectations for faculty. The Faculty Relations Committee would draw chairs’ attention to two things: first, these documents must be approved by the department, which we take to mean, at least
typically, that the department will vote to adopt them; secondly, departments must approve any changes to these documents “prior to the commencement of the calendar year to be evaluated.” However, we see these documents as a significant step forward in making the merit process more transparent, better understood, and fairer, so we hope that many departments will be able to get agreement to waive this timing requirement for the 2010 evaluations.

3. Recommendation 1.8: .25 and .75 will be added to the scale of possible scores for performance in each of the three areas of research, teaching, and service, pending modification of the Memorandum of Agreement.

4. Recommendation 2.5: Language has been added to allow departments to determine whether graduate supervision counts as teaching or as research. What is required is that it be clear to faculty how it is to be counted, and that it not be “counted twice.”

The Faculty Relations Committee thanks the Working Group for its successful efforts over the past two years to clarify and improve performance evaluation practices for faculty, Chairs, and Deans at the University of Waterloo.
Review of the Faculty Annual Performance Evaluation Process
Recommendations revised by Faculty Relations Committee – March 25, 2010
* - modified, ** - set aside for further discussion

The complete Review document can be found at:
http://provost.uwaterloo.ca/Memos/Report_FacPerfEvaluationWorkingGroup_Apr%202009.pdf

THE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION PROCESS

1.1 Maintain the basic structure of the current performance evaluation process. Implement enhancements to strengthen the process, as recommended in this report.

*1.2 Conduct evaluations in larger departments (of 15 or more members) with a departmental performance review committee, advisory to the Chair. Smaller departments will continue to decide by majority vote whether or not to have such a committee. However, since the advantages provided by a committee are significant, departments in faculties with a number of smaller units are encouraged to consider multi-department committees and other innovative arrangements. [Responsibility: Provost and Deans]

*1.3 Prior to the commencement of the calendar year to be evaluated, provide faculty members with an annually reviewed and updated document outlining the evaluation process and the performance expectations in their department for scholarship, teaching and service. This document should be approved by the members of the department. It should not contravene the Memorandum of Agreement or Faculty rules governing performance evaluations. [Responsibility: Provost, Deans and Chairs]

1.4 Chairs and all members of the performance evaluation committee should be informed of, and take into account, all relevant information, including whether there has been any adjustment in a faculty member’s weightings. [Responsibility: Deans]

*1.5 Insert suitable wording in the Memorandum of Agreement by adding a new clause under 13.5.4 (c), to clarify that for faculty on fractional load or leaves of absence, expectations for quality remain the same, while expectations for quantity change. [Responsibility: Faculty Relations Committee]

**1.6 Evaluate tenured faculty bi-annually, and evaluate tenure-track faculty annually, and provide detailed feedback. [Responsibility: Faculty Relations Committee]

1.7 Provide every faculty member with histograms showing how their merit scores rank in their department and Faculty. The current histograms need to be redesigned to make them easier to read and more meaningful. [Responsibility: Faculty Relations Committee]

*1.8 Increase the dynamic range of evaluation in all areas (scholarship, teaching and service) by adding .25 and .75 to the scale of possible scores. [Responsibility: Faculty Relations Committee]

*1.9 Chairs and performance evaluation committees should be prepared to use a similarly wide range of scores for all three areas.

*1.10 Stop the practice of assigning a score of 1 in all categories to new faculty in their first year and, instead, assign a score based on actual performance or, when too little information is available, assign a score equal to the departmental average for their rank. [Responsibility: Provost, Deans and Chairs]
Note: This recommendation calls for the deletion of 13.5.4 (b) (1) —"A newly appointed Member shall receive a rating of 1.0 (satisfactory) in any category where assessment is not possible"—in the Memorandum of Agreement. [Responsibility: Faculty Relations Committee]

*1.11 Establish in each Faculty a standard template to be used by all faculty for presentation of performance evaluation materials. It will require two to four years of information for teaching, scholarship, and service. Recommendation 3.1 suggests that Scholarship be evaluated over a two to four year period. While evaluations for teaching and service are for the period since the previous evaluation, the additional information can provide useful context for the Chair and the performance evaluation committee.

1.12 Provide Chairs and performance evaluation committee members with access to training sessions and support materials that allow them to perform this difficult task as effectively as possible. [Responsibility: Provost and Deans]

1.13 Establish a centralized, website for faculty, Chairs and Deans to access pertinent documents, policies and updates related to performance evaluations.

TEACHING

*2.1 Develop in each Faculty a common course evaluation instrument for use, and establish a uniform method for collecting, analyzing and disseminating the results. Investigate existing evaluation instruments for university courses in use at Canadian post-secondary institutions. [Responsibility: Deans’ Council]

2.2 Develop a document for Chairs and performance evaluation committees summarizing the best empirical evidence about how factors aside from quality of teaching affect student evaluations.

2.3 Departments should be open to other sorts of evidence of teaching quality besides student questionnaires and have clear rules about what counts for summative evaluation and what is to be used only for formative purposes. [Responsibility: Department Chairs]

2.4 Develop a document for Chairs and performance evaluation committees summarizing the best empirical evidence about how factors aside from quality of teaching affect student evaluations. [Responsibility: Associate VP Academic with the support of the Centre for Teaching Excellence]

*2.5 Establish whether graduate supervision counts primarily for teaching or research, and that it can only count for one or the other. Develop, at the department level, appropriate methods for evaluation of the quality of supervision, not merely its quantity. [Responsibility: Department Chairs]

SCHOLARSHIP

*3.1 Evaluate scholarship on the basis of a two to four year period, and evaluate teaching and service on the basis of work done since the previous evaluation. [Responsibility: Faculty Relations Committee]

3.2 Clarify that scholarly work outside of the usual peer reviewed venues is valued, but that the onus is on the faculty member to provide evidence of its quality, impact and relevance.
SERVICE

*4.1 Establish internal service as an essential duty for faculty. In smaller academic units, faculty have an obligation to do service within the unit. [Responsibility: Deans’ Council]

4.2 Require faculty members to describe the nature and scope of their service contributions so that they can be properly evaluated. [Responsibility: Deans’ Council]

*4.3 Include “good citizenship” among the criteria for evaluation of service, so that faculty members can be recognized for activities such as mentoring new faculty, being available in the department, being willing to take on hard-to-cover courses, and being available to students. [Responsibility: Deans’ Council]
Comment: Generally acceptable pending an elaboration of “good citizenship.”

**4.4 For those in administrative roles that carry a stipend, establish a portion of the stipend as an ongoing salary enhancement, at the end of the term, to be funded separately from the merit pool. Eliminate informal practices, such as automatic ratings of “2” or use of the Outstanding Performance Award in ways outside those specified in policy, for rewarding the carrying out of significant administrative duties. [Responsibility: Provost]

4.5 Inform faculty when they take on a significant administrative role that they can have a temporary adjustment of their weightings for purposes of merit evaluation and that the adjustment involves a change in expectations for quantity of work in each area, but not for quality. [Responsibility: Deans and Chairs]

RELATED ISSUES

*5.1 Further investigate two related issues: a) whether the merit evaluation process has features that generate anomalies such as those based on gender; b) how to use the flexibility of the merit evaluation process, in conjunction with other policies, to make UW a more family friendly employer. [Responsibility: Provost and FAUW President]