Guidelines on Performance Review of Tenured Faculty

Background

At its meeting on May 16, 1997, the Board of Governors adopted the recommendations in the report of the University of North Carolina Committee to Study Post-Tenure Review. A copy of that report is available at General Administration. Post-tenure review is defined in the report as "a comprehensive, formal, periodic evaluation of cumulative faculty performance, the prime purpose of which is to ensure faculty development and to promote faculty vitality" (p. 8).

The report asserts that review of the performance of tenured faculty in the University shall be "to support and encourage excellence among tenured faculty by:

1. Recognizing and rewarding exemplary faculty performance;

2. Providing for a clear plan and timetable for improvement of performance of faculty found deficient; and

3. For those whose performance remains deficient, providing for the imposition of appropriate sanctions, which may, in the most serious cases, include a recommendation for discharge" (p. 12).

The report also provides broad principles for carrying out such reviews but leaves room for each institution to develop the details of its own process following the release of guidelines by General Administration. In keeping with Section 602 of *The Code*, the board of trustees of each constituent institution shall adopt the policies and regulations governing performance reviews of tenured faculty. Institutional policies and procedures will also be approved pursuant to Policy 400.3.3 and should be included in all appropriate documents of the constituent institutions.

The report further specifies that "developing a system of post-tenure review will require reexamination of the effectiveness of current faculty personnel policies as well as planning and program review policies" (p. 13). Initiation of these performance reviews in the University of North Carolina provides constituent institutions with an opportunity to create a policy that examines individual faculty contributions to departmental, school/college, and university goals as well as to the academic programs in which faculty teach. Thoughtful attention to the ways in which post-tenure review can promote faculty vitality across their careers will assure that such reviews lead to increased effectiveness within the university.

Guidelines to assist in formulating institutional policy concerning performance reviews of tenured faculty are set out below. These guidelines have been promulgated and are periodically reviewed to assure the continuing rigorous application of post-tenure review as intended by the Board of Governors as described in Policy 400.3.3.

Guidelines

Each constituent institution shall observe the following guidelines in developing or revising institutional policies and procedures for post-tenure review:

1. Proposed revised policies must be submitted to General Administration for approval in accordance with any timeframe established and communicated by the president of the University, or his or her designee.

2. Institutional policies shall assure that each tenured faculty member undergoes a cumulative review no less frequently than every five years. (Note: a review undertaken to grant tenure or to decide on promotion qualifies as such a cumulative review.)

3. Institutional policies shall assure that faculty performance will be examined relative to the mission of the institution, college, and program.

4. Institutional policies shall be in compliance with the criteria and procedures for due process and for discharge or other disciplinary action established in Chapter VI of *The Code* of

the University.

5. Post-tenure reviews shall evaluate all aspects of the professional performance of faculty, whose primary responsibilities are teaching, and/or research, and/or service. If faculty responsibilities are primarily only in one or two of these areas, the post-tenure review and resulting recommendations should take this allocation of responsibilities into account.

6. At the beginning of the post-tenure review cycle, the faculty member shall develop with his/her department chair a five-year goal or plan. This plan can be modified annually by the faculty member, in consultation with the department chair, as deemed appropriate by changes in institutional, departmental, or personal circumstances. This plan should indicate milestones aligned with annual performance evaluations.

7. Institutional policies shall show the relationship between the annual performance review of tenured faculty and the post-tenure review criteria. Annual performance reviews, however, are not a substitute for the "comprehensive, periodic, cumulative review" required by the Board of Governors. The post-tenure review process can be informed by annual reviews but must involve an additional assessment as described in these guidelines.

8. Institutional policies shall explicitly involve peers in the post-tenure review process. A peer review committee for a department or academic unit will be selected by a process agreed upon by the tenured faculty in that unit. The faculty member being reviewed will not have the option of selecting members of the peer review committee. The department chair or academic unit head must consult with the peer review committee in rendering his or her evaluation. Deans must provide an evaluative review in addition to the review conducted by the peer review committee and the department chair. The provost must certify that all aspects of the post- tenure review process for that year are in compliance with policy and guidelines.

9. Institutions shall provide ongoing support and training for all post-tenure review evaluators, including peer review committee members, department chairs or academic unit heads, and deans. UNC General Administration will prepare digital training modules that focus on the basics of state personnel policy and UNC policies, regulations, and guidelines related to personnel and tenure; the essential elements of a useful and thoughtful review; how to prepare, conduct and manage a meaningful review process; and how to provide constructive criticism in a positive manner. Campuses shall ensure that all post-tenure review evaluators benefit from these modules and receive training in campus-specific policies and procedures. In submitting required annual post-tenure review reports, the provost will also certify that required training has been conducted.

10. UNC General Administration will evaluate the training and post-tenure review processes of all campuses during the 2016-2017 fiscal year. In subsequent years, UNC General Administration shall review the post-tenure review processes of all campuses on a three-year rotating cycle unless irregularities at a particular campus are identified. If such irregularities are identified, then UNC General Administration shall conduct more frequent reviews of that institution as deemed appropriate by the president or his or her designee. As part of this review, the president or his or her designee will certify that the constituent institution is in compliance with all aspects of the policy and guidelines.

11. Institutional policies shall establish at least three assessment categories. These categories must reflect whether a faculty member exceeds expectations, meets expectations, or does not meet expectations. Institutional policies also shall assure that there is written feedback to the faculty member being reviewed as well as a mechanism for the faculty member to respond to the evaluation. As intended by the Board of Governors, this feedback should include recognition for performance that exceeds expectations. Because performance rewards are often part of the annual review process, the post-tenure review may provide additional support for this form of recognition. Any review that results in an evaluation that the faculty member does not meet expectations must include a statement of the faculty member's primary responsibilities and specific descriptions of

shortcomings as they relate to the faculty member's assigned duties and the directional goals established. A faculty member's response to a review that the faculty member does not meet expectations will also be shared at the next highest administrative level.

12. Institutional policies shall require individual development or career plans for all faculty members who do not meet expectations in the cumulative review. These plans must include specific steps designed to lead to improvement, a specified timeline in which improvement is expected to occur, and a clear statement of consequences should improvement not occur within the designated timeline. The use of mentoring peers is encouraged, and progress meetings with the department chair or academic unit head must occur on at least a semi-annual basis during the specified timeline. If duties are modified as a result of an assessment that the faculty member does not meet expectations, then the development or career plan should so indicate and take into account the new allocation of responsibilities.

As policies are developed and revised, institutions shall consider resource implications of a meaningful performance review system, identifying in advance the sources of support for the process and its outcomes.

Implementation of revised institutional policies will be effective upon approval as provided in Policy 400.3.3.