

Stephen F. Austin State University
SFASU Faculty Senate
Committee on Professional Welfare I
Ad-hoc Subcommittee on Anonymous Evaluation of
Academic Administrative Personnel Report, April 9th, 1997
Passed, May 14, 1997, Faculty Senate meeting #266

Academic chairs, deans and other academic administrators who report to the academic vice-president are vital links in the communication between faculty and university administration. In addition, as stated in the University Policy Manual in Policy E-10, Departmental Administration, "the chairman is an administrator, the quality of whose performance has fundamental impact on the success of the institution in attaining its specific goals." This statement applies to all administrators.

The evaluation process for academic administrators should focus on identifying and correcting weaknesses in the communication link from faculty to university administration and on developing and improving the managerial performance of academic chairs and deans. In order to be useful for developmental purposes, the evaluation process should solicit the most honest and critical feedback. A guarantee of anonymity assures the most honest responses in upward appraisal.

At the present time, the evaluation form used to evaluate academic deans and chairs by the Vice-President for Academic Affairs requires a signature by the respondent, along with other identifying information. The evaluation process has not uniformly required a signature until the current form went into effect.

A literature search in ABI/Inform, an index to management literature, and a search of sample policies and faculty handbooks on the Internet support the notions that upward appraisal works best 1) if it is intended to be developmental, and 2) if all evaluations are collectively examined for trends to determine strengths and weaknesses of the manager being reviewed. The usefulness of upward appraisals also hinge on the honesty and truthfulness of the feedback given, and to ensure this, standard practice is to preserve the anonymity of the comments of evaluators.

Faculty Senate Chair Dahmus reported in the March 1997 meeting that he took an informal poll of faculty senate representatives at the Spring, 1997 Council of Faculty Governance Organizations. Of the 25 representatives present, none indicated they submitted signed evaluations of deans and chairs. As a follow-up, a random telephone survey was done.

Administrators at The University of North Texas, Sam Houston State University, Lamar University, Texas A&M, and the University of Texas at Arlington do not request or require faculty to sign their evaluations of their academic administrators. At East Texas State University, signatures on such evaluations are optional.

The Committee therefore recommends that the process for evaluating academic administrators by faculty guarantee anonymity for all respondents. Suggested changes to current policies which are affected are attached.

Recommended for further study: Expanded list of evaluation criteria for both academic administrators; Anonymous peer evaluations (tenure and promotion)

References

Informal Poll of Faculty Senate representatives attending COFGO meeting, Spring, 1997. Out of 25 representatives, none indicated that they sign evaluations of chairs or deans at their university. Source: Dr. John Dahmus, Chair, and Jimmi Rushing, Treasurer and Senator, Library, SFASU Faculty Senate; attendees at COFGO Spring 1997 meeting, Austin, Texas.

NCSU Faculty Handbook: Chapter 5, Reviews of Academic Administrators. North Carolina State University. <http://www2.ncsu/provost/info/fh/reviews.htm> (April 3, 1997).

Policies: Department Chair Evaluation: Boise State University. <http://diamond.idbsu.edu/~margene/policies/section5/5386-b.html> (April 3, 1997).

Telephone interviews with:

University of North Texas: Vice-President of Academic Affairs;
Sam Houston State University: Dr. Gilmore;
University of Texas -- Arlington: Dr. Ridgeway, Provost;
Lamar University -- Dr. Bill Kale;
Texas A&M -- College Station: Faculty Senate officer;
East Texas State University -- College of Education, Secretary.

Antonioni, David. 1994. The effects of feedback accountability on upward appraisal ratings. *Personnel Psychology* 47 (2): 349-356.

Dalton, Gene, and Kurt Sandholtz. 1990. How am I doing? *Executive Excellence* 7 (5): 6-7.
Kiechel, Walter, III. 1989. When subordinates evaluate the boss. *Fortune* 119 (13): 201-202.

London, Manuel, Arthur J. Wohlers, and Phillip Gallagher. 1990. A feedback approach to management development. *Journal of Management Development* 9 (6): 17-31.

Macher, Ken. 1986. The politics of organizations. *Personnel Journal* 65 (2): 80-84.

Rotondi, Thomas. 1989. The anonymity factor in questionnaire surveys. *Personnel Journal* 68 (2): 92-101.

Taylor, Glenn L. , and Martha N. Morgan. 1995. The reverse appraisal: a tool for leadership development. *Quality Progress* 28 (12): 81-87.

Werther, William B., Jr. 1990. Memo to the boss: we can help you. *HRMagazine* 35 (4): 112,110.

[Attachment 1 ~ Go to Attachment 2: Departmental Administration \(Evaluation of Departmental Chairs\)](#)

**Performance Review Of Officers Reporting Index E-38A
To The Vice President For Academic Affairs Page 1 of 1
Original Implementation: December 6, 1979
Last Revision: January, 1996**

The Vice President for Academic Affairs will conduct a performance review of each officer reporting to him/her in an individual conference in the late spring each year. The performance review will focus on the fulfillment of those responsibilities outlined by University policy or included in specific assignments.

A summary of the performance review will be prepared by the Vice President for Academic Affairs for the individual reviewed and the President.

During the second year of service and once every three years thereafter, the performance review of college deans and the Director of the Library will be augmented by written and **[omit: "signed"]** input solicited by the Vice President for Academic Affairs of

all department chairs/directors in the college/library, all full-time faculty members from the departments of the college/library, and other deans. The questions to be used will be developed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs in consultation with the deans and library director, the department chairs/directors, and the President. ***[Evaluations of all subordinate faculty should be collected, filed and summarized in a manner which assures confidentiality and preserves the anonymity of individual evaluators.]*** A summary of the triennial review will be prepared by the Vice President for Academic Affairs for the individual reviewed; the department chairs/directors, faculty, and deans participating in the process; and the President.

SOURCE OF AUTHORITY: Vice President for Academic Affairs

CROSS REFERENCE: None

CONTACT FOR REVISION: Vice President for Academic Affairs

Attachment 2 ~ [Go to Attachment 1: Performance Review Of Officers Reporting To The Vice President For Academic Affairs](#)

DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATION E-10A

Original Implementation: March 7, 1978

Last Revision: None

The Chief Administrative Officer of an Academic Department

The chief administrator of an academic department shall be the chairman.

General Description of the Department Chair

[text omitted]

Major Responsibilities of the Department Chair

[text omitted]

Selection of the Department Chair

[text omitted]

Evaluation of the Department Chair

[text omitted]

3. At least once every three years the dean will initiate a collateral confidential evaluation of the department chairman's performance by the faculty of the department. The instrument used in this formal evaluation, "Department Chair Administrative Effectiveness Appraisal," shall request each faculty member to provide a recommendation on the continuance of the chairman.

4. Confidential evaluations of a department chairman's performance by the faculty may be initiated at any time at the call of the chairman, dean, Vice President for Academic Affairs, or President. ***[Evaluations shall be collected and filed in a manner which will preserve the anonymity of the evaluators.]***

5. The dean of the college will review with the department chairman the results of the annual administrative evaluation and any evaluation by the faculty ***[including a summary of faculty comments]***. After this review the report of the evaluation with

recommendations based thereon will be submitted by the dean of the college to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Following this, the dean of the college will meet with the department for a report on the evaluation and the state of the department.

SOURCE OF AUTHORITY: President

CROSS REFERENCE: Faculty Handbook

CONTACT FOR REVISION: President

FORMS: Department Chair Administrative Effectiveness