

**SFASU Faculty Senate
Policy Revisions - Administrative Evaluations
(Evaluations of Department Chairs & College Deans)**

April 12, 2000

Proposed changes to policies E-10A and E-38A (passed as amended)

Currently, policy E-10A calls for confidential (but not strictly anonymous) evaluations of chairs, and policy E-38A explicitly calls for signed evaluations of deans. As previously documented (see enclosed packet containing faculty comments and other data collected), most faculty feel that the requirement to sign evaluations of superiors seriously hinders the possibility of honest, and sometimes constructively critical, input into the evaluation of chairs and deans.

The previous proposal was rejected by the Educational Programs Committee of the Academic Affairs Council for three reasons (see memo in enclosed packet). First, they felt that the evaluations are professional judgments and, for credibility's sake, should be signed. We argue that they will be professional judgments whether or not they are signed, since we are professionals. Although a very small number of faculty may see the anonymity as a way to be unprofessional without consequences, we argue that such evaluations would clearly stand out from the rest, and should thus be treated as an aberration (similar to how student evaluations of faculty are handled).

The second point that the deans made was that the signatures would help the deans ameliorate indicated problems. We counter that most true problems will be indicated by the fact that many of the faculty note the same issue. In such a case, it would not matter which specific individuals pointed it out, because it is affecting the faculty of that department/college as a whole. Reports of major problems specific to an individual will be likely to include sufficient detail to allow the appropriate superior to investigate further. We acknowledge that in a very few cases where ethical violations, etc. are indicated, further, non-anonymous input may be necessary from the faculty. However, as with student evaluations, we expect this to be the exception to the rule.

Finally, the deans claim that anonymous evaluations are not necessary because they do not specifically know of an instance in which a chair has "retaliated" against someone who made an unfavorable comment. Further, they note that they do not know of a case where a chair has obtained the author information of their evaluations. We feel that these points are irrelevant. Just because the deans do not explicitly know of such an instance does not mean that it has not happened in some form. Most importantly, we are arguing for the principle: to have the opportunity to give honest, possibly critical but constructive feedback about our superiors' performance, WITHOUT the fear (even if unfounded) of any form of retaliation. Unfortunately, this fear is real, especially among untenured faculty. Thus, the past evaluations received, and any which require signatures in the future, should be treated as not-entirely-valid evaluations. This means that all of us are wasting time and effort in a process that is not accomplishing its objectives.

Therefore, we again submit that we would like to modify the two policies (E-10A and E-38A) to ensure anonymity. SFA seems to be the only university in the state of Texas that requires signed evaluations of chairs and deans by the faculty. (Please read the compilation of responses from Faculty Senate chairs from universities around the state. These responses were made to the question of whether or not their faculty are required to sign evaluations of superiors.) Thus, other institutions have recognized that anonymous evaluations will lead to a more valid evaluation of performance. We request that both policies be changed to explicitly state that evaluations do not need to be signed.