

Faculty Rating of Administration Committee Final Report 2010-2011

Submitted May 23, 2011

1. Overview

First, I apologize for not submitting a final report before the last Senate meeting of the 2010-2011 academic year. In part this was due to postponing a final wrap-up and assessment meeting until papers and exams became pressing. It took longer, I am told, than expected for the technical processing to be done. I hope this will be a one-time, first time process as the committee originally hoped that the survey could be completed in January while faculty are still fresh and the results made available in February or early March so that the Senate might consider the results.

While I will not be a member next year, I would charge the in-coming committee with a follow-up report from Dick Greutzemacher about the process and the results. This first assessment should establish a baseline for future evaluations by the faculty. An important unresolved question is how the results should be distributed; I had assumed, in the name of transparency, that all results would be available to the 35% of faculty (itself a major achievement, exceeding the committee's minimum of one-third participation for a meaningful result) who participated.

The Office of Institutional Research decided to limit access to members of departments and colleges. The committee should decide next year whether this is the best policy or not.

2. Committee Activity 2010-2011

The members were Richard Rice (Head); Ralph Covino; Richard Greutzemacher (ex officio); Debbie Ingram; Lynn Purkey; Gavin Townsend; Gary Wilkerson; Steve White. We met on September 13, 27, and October 11, and also communicated by email about issues raised. The overall objective was to make the survey much simpler and to move it to digital format while maintaining anonymity. A short list of five essential questions was created, later amended to six during

Senate discussions. The plan was submitted twice to the Senate, the first discussion tabled until legal advice could be sought concerning privacy of results. It was determined that no university policy would be violated if we shared the results with participants. This was an important issue as the AAUP and research indicates that more faculty would take the survey seriously if results were known.

The short list of questions resembles the brevity of faculty evaluations by students, and the previous lengthy list included many items not known to most faculty. We also included a neutral option in the rating scale on advice of those familiar with surveys.

The committee created the following list, and item four was broken into two questions via Senate amendment as mentioned above:

- ▶ Items appropriate for the Chancellor and Provost:
 1. Provides effective leadership.
 2. Shows transparency in decision making.
 3. Communicate effectively with faculty.
 4. Accessible to faculty and open to suggestions.
 5. Represents campus effectively to the community and the UT system.

- ▶ For Deans, item five will be replaced by: Represents the interests of the college to the administration

- ▶ For Heads, item five will be replaced by: Represents the interests of the department to the administration

3. Survey Results

Disclosure was discussed in committee at length and with some dissension (at least two members of the committee voiced concerns about disclosure). However, the

committee urged sharing the results of the six basic questions (not any written comments) because perhaps faculty (80 %) felt the annual survey is a useless activity since we do not see the results of our opinions. The increase of participation from about 20% to 35% is a major improvement, perhaps due to both the new digital format and the posting of results. It did take a bit of prodding by the committee head to obtain the minimum participation. It is to be hoped in future this will not be necessary.

The committee assumed that the majority of faculty at UTC is able to make objective professional judgments, just as student evaluations assume that students will make objective comments.

4. Definition of Faculty

While a future committee may decided to broaden the participation to include adjuncts, this year we decided that their interests are sufficiently different to warrant a separate survey which we strongly support. There was also some concern as to the semester-to-semester employment of adjuncts, which might give pause to voicing problems, as real as they might be.

Respectfully submitted on May 23, 2011

Richard Rice, Head

Faculty Rating of Administration Committee (FARC) 2010-2011