Faculty Town Hall on EDOs

February 19, 2021 (morning & afternoon sessions)

In February 2021, the Faculty Senate hosted two town halls asking faculty what they would like to see changed about the EDO process.

This document serves as a summary of the comments provided by faculty who attended the town halls or emailed the president. This summary will be provided to Provost Hale, Vice Provost Mathews, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, and distributed to the Faculty Senate.

Need to Streamline Review Systems

One System for All Reviews

Currently faculty have to use different systems for different reviews.

Some faculty complete the EDO process through Digital Measures (DM), others do not.

DM is not used for RTP and PTR processes, so faculty are left to create their own digital portfolio systems. Having to duplicate materials in multiples systems wastes time.

Could all reviews (annual, promotion, tenure, post-tenure) be done through one system?

Improvements to Digital Measures

Within DM the process for completing an EDO seems to change each year. Some faculty think DM, in its current form, is not fully supporting the EDO process.

The process for entering information and including it in the EDO needs to be streamlined. A UX designer needs to work with faculty to identify ways to improve DM.

For example, faculty work does not always fit in the categories currently included in DM. Needs vary across disciplines.

DM also requires dates for most items, but we do not always have dates for items (like works in progress) and the dates pulled by DM for the EDO do not always match the time-period under review (for example, work from March and April sometimes is not automatically included).

For faculty who do creative work, the process for entering items can be very involved and time consuming because their work is not listed in online research database. Could the process for manually entering information be streamlined?

Please stop the constant notifications sent by DM. Getting emails on a near weekly basis starting in December is too much.

Need to Review EDO Timeline

Frequency of Full Reviews

Some faculty questioned the need for full reviews each year. Could we move to a less frequent system? Reducing the frequency of reviews would help reduce the burden on department heads, especially those with large faculties, and would reduce the time faculty spend completing reviews.

Ideas for changing the frequency of full reviews include:

- transitioning faculty to bi-annual reviews after reaching the associate professor/lecturer level,
- timing NTT faculty reviews with contract renewals,
- moving to a 2-year cycle in which year 1 is a light review and year 2 is a full review.

Timing of Reviews

Many faculty expressed displeasure with the current timeline for reviews. A March 1 deadline is too early. Much of the work done by faculty in the second half of the spring semester goes undocumented. Also March is a busy time for department heads, with attention drawn elsewhere.

Faculty discussed several different possible timelines, each with their advantages and disadvantages:

- **Mid-May deadline for performance reviews** – faculty could submit spring grades, take a week to update Digital Measures, then submit reports. Advantages of this approach include: it asks faculty to complete a review after a semester is complete rather than around the mid-term mark in a semester; and it would allow for spring teaching evaluations to be included.
- **Fall deadline for reports** – in August or September faculty could submit report for prior academic year. Advantages of this approach include: it would allow faculty to report on an entire academic year, including the summer; the performance report could be combined with defining objectives for the academic year that is beginning; the timing would align with T/TT faculty undergoing tenure and/or promotion. Disadvantages of this approach include: many NTT faculty are on annual contracts which need to be renewed prior to August.
- **Calendar year** – in January faculty would report on activities from the last calendar year. Advantages of this approach: it would align with staff annual reviews, which would be helpful in departments that have significant numbers of both (like the library); it would make it easier to coordinate goals between faculty and staff; reviews could be done during winter break. Disadvantages of this approach include: it is confusing given many activities, especially service assignments, run on the academic calendar.

Other thoughts on the EDO timeline include:

- Department heads need more than 2 weeks to evaluate faculty performance reports.
- Could performance reports for the year that is ending and objectives for the upcoming year be done at the same time?

Defining Objectives

Do we even need to define objectives? Faculty are split on this issue.

Some faculty see the objective process as unnecessary "busy work." It can be hard to set precise objectives because teaching schedules change, research projects change, etc. Faculty often find themselves writing general objectives or ending the year with activities that do not match the original objectives.

Others find the objective process to be useful. For example, objectives are helpful for planning the year ahead. Objectives are a form of documentation during the PTR process. Having department heads confirm objectives creates a transparent process. Objectives can help NTT faculty define their job expectations given their contracts are often vague.

Ideas related to objectives include:

- Require objectives if someone gets a low rating the year before.
- Require objectives for tenure-track faculty.
- Let department decide whether objectives are required.

Rankings

Some NTT faculty are piloting a 5-level system (two levels above and two level below meets expectations).

UTC should revisit the possibility of moving to a 5-level system - two levels above and two level below meets expectations could encourage faculty growth. But what would two levels of exceeds mean, especially for raises?

We need guidelines for what exceeds merit (especially if we move to a 5-level system). Ideas for creating guidelines include:

- Having departments define the standard in their bylaws (although this can be hard in departments where jobs vary greatly, like the library).
- Creating rubrics.

Forms

NTT Faculty

A different annual review form should be used for NTT faculty. The English department is piloting a new form (NTAR) which has received positive feedback. The NTAR should be adopted across campus.

Department Heads

CAS has expanded the EDO form used by department heads to include administrative tasks. Has this approach been adopted across campus?

Meetings

Several faculty mentioned that the most valuable part of the EDO process is the meeting and conversations that occur during process, not the paperwork.

Who is Involved in the Process?

Associate Department Heads

Some departments include the associate department head in the evaluation process. Does the handbook allow for this? If the practice is to be continued the handbook needs to be updated.

There needs to be more transparency in who is doing the faculty evaluations (i.e. whether an associate department head is included in the process).

NTT Faculty

NTT faculty are evaluated by T/TT faculty. It was suggested that NTT committees should review materials for NTT faculty seeking reappointment and promotion.