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UNIVERSITY SENATE
Faculty and Personnel Affairs Committee

Report and Recommendation on Academic Reappointment/Promotion Form 1-a

1.   THE CHARGE

S-1007 Academic Reappointment/Promotion Form 1-a: Review Academic Reappointment/Promotion Form 1-A, and make recommendations to improve the form in terms of usability and user-friendliness, as well as scheduling and notification of the need for faculty to complete the form, and versatility of the form for other purposes. Consider the supporting information prepared by Senator Leslie Fishbein, who proposed this charge. Respond to Senate Executive Committee by April 2011.

2.   SUMMARY

The Faculty and Personnel Affairs Committee (FPAC) was asked how best to revise Form 1 and its analogs (Forms 1-a through II-4) to ensure that these forms are user-friendly in terms of both input and ultimate use, and to ensure that all faculty members, particularly those newly appointed, are aware of how to maintain the kinds of information (teaching, scholarship, and service) required for the forms.

A subcommittee appointed by the FPAC surveyed those with a long history of data input to forms used for promotion at Rutgers (mostly administrative assistants) at various units in the University on the Newark, New Brunswick, and Camden campuses. General issues associated with Form 1 as well as the online Faculty Survey database, used to generate the form, are three-fold: 1) there are technical difficulties associated with physical input of data and generation of the Form 1 itself; 2) the ease of output of these data into formats suitable for other use (such as *curriculum vitae*) is lacking; and 3) a culture of "faculty ownership" of recordkeeping and the use of the Faculty Survey is lacking. The FPAC recommends that these technical and output issues be resolved, that the culture of recordkeeping and information flow to faculty be improved, and that the Faculty Survey be used as the basis of record for reappointment, promotion and tenure, merit increases, and post-tenure review.

3.   REPORT

The FPAC met and discussed the charge in four sessions, namely on 9/24/2010, 10/22/2010, 11/19/2010, and 1/28/2011. During the September meeting, the committee heard from the author of the charge, Leslie Fishbein, Senator from the School of Arts and Sciences, New Brunswick, and appointed a subcommittee (FPAC committee members Vivian Fernández, Leslie Fishbein, Ann Gould, and Mary Wagner) to investigate the charge. The subcommittee met on three dates, namely 11/4/2010, 12/16/2010, and 2/9/2011. Richard Tedesco, Application Developer in the Office of Institutional Research and Academic Planning, visited with the subcommittee to review the input and output processes associated with the online Faculty Survey database (https://surveys.rutgers.edu/facsurv), which is the suggested and preferred method to generate Form 1 and its analogs. The subcommittee also deliberated on communication issues associated with Form 1 and the Faculty Survey with particularly valuable input from Vivian Fernández, Vice President for Faculty and Staff Resources who, although not a Senator, is a

member of the FPAC and volunteered to participate in the subcommittee as well.

3.I.   Background

Form 1-a and its analogs (Forms 1-b through II-4) are the forms of record used for faculty reappointments and promotion and tenure decisions at Rutgers. Form 1-a, used most widely, sets the criteria for general research/teaching faculty. Forms 1-b through 1-e are modified to meet the needs of faculty in the creative or performing arts, or for county agents, extension specialists, or clinical faculty, respectively. Forms II-1 through II-4 are used for promotion to Professor II. In all forms, candidates are expected to provide data in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service. Scholarship, in the case of county agents, extension specialists, and clinical faculty, is considered extension practice, extension scholarship, and clinical practice, respectively. For simplicity, in this report, the collective promotion forms (Form 1-a and its analogs) will be referred to as "Form 1."

Prior to reappointment or promotion, faculty members may download and fill in the most current version of the promotion form as Microsoft Word documents from the Rutgers University Academic Appointments/Reappointments web page (http://ruweb.rutgers.edu/oldqueens/FACpromotions.shtml). Alternatively, the university supports the use of the online Faculty Survey database to generate the forms. Faculty members access their own profile on the database using their NetID. The survey serves as a single point of data entry for reporting needs and includes an input menu in which biographical, teaching, scholarship, and service data are archived, and an output menu from which the promotion forms as well as resumes and other reports are generated (in html form or as Word documents). The Survey includes other features such as the Media Experts Program and Speakers Bureau. Once Form 1 is generated from the Faculty Survey database, most faculty members find it necessary to modify the form to correct errors, formatting, and inconsistencies. The University provides a one-time service whereby faculty may submit their *curriculum vitae* and the data will be inputted to the Faculty Survey for them. After that, it is up to the faculty member to keep the database current.

During committee discussions, the FPAC and the Form 1-a subcommittee identified issues with the promotion forms and the Faculty Survey. In general, these included unclear instructions, inconsistent mentoring and information flow for new hires, technical issues with data entry to the Faculty Survey, less than suitable adaptability of data for use in other forms, and the sense of frustration and waste of time associated with faculty reluctance both to pay attention to criteria and timelines for promotion and to keep their data current.

3.II.   Questionnaire

To better understand issues associated with the Faculty Survey and Form 1 from those who have extensive experience with the process, Senator Fishbein forwarded a survey of six questions to department administrative assistants in units University-wide. These questions were:

1.   What are the most frequent problems that you encounter in terms of mistakes in filling out Form 1-a and analogous forms that cause such forms to be returned to their originating department? Can you propose any solutions that might reduce those mistakes or might eliminate the situation causing such mistakes in the first place?
2.   Are there problems inherent in the formatting of Form 1-a that should be corrected? If so, please specify them.
3.   To what degree do you find the difficulties in completing Form 1-a to be related to faculty unawareness of what Form 1-a requires?
4.   Are faculty members in your unit notified shortly after their initial appointment of what is required on Form 1-a?

5.   Do the chairs in your units or other mentors regularly remind faculty members of their responsibility to update their Faculty Survey information?

6.   What suggestions do you have for making Form 1-a and the processes surrounding it more user-friendly to both faculty members and to the administrators who have to work with the form?

Comments concerning one or more of the survey questions were received from 16 units (12 from New Brunswick, two from Newark, and two from Camden). Some units reported that faculty in their units download and populate the most current promotion form from the University promotions webpage. Other faculty members maintain an older version of the promotion form and update it with the most current instructions at promotion time. Others still use the Faculty Survey database to generate the promotion form.

From questionnaire responses, several general issues were identified. First, there are technical issues associated with physical input of data to either the downloaded copy of Form 1 or the Faculty Survey database. Second, the ease of output of these data from the Faculty Survey into formats that suit other appropriate uses (such as generation of *curriculum vitae* in varied formats) can be improved. Third, a culture of "faculty ownership" of the process (including recordkeeping) is lacking.

Specific questionnaire responses regarding data input and ease of use included:

- Instructions are not clear: information often is populated in the wrong section of the form or is duplicated in more than one section. Specific examples:
  - it is difficult to distinguish and define lectures that might be considered scholarly, public service, research-based, or extension scholarship, and these types activities might be duplicated or recorded in the wrong section of the form
  - placement of creative activities in the proper section in Form 1-b, for example, is often difficult
- The data provided by CTAAR in the course evaluation section is not always up to date, is missing information, or does not match the hard copy sent to the candidate
- Data entry in the proscribed chronological order is problematic
- It is not clear how to treat course releases or sabbaticals in the teaching grid
- Decisions regarding which supplementary materials to include can be difficult: how much back-up (supplemental) information should be provided for each section of Form 1?
- There is often a lack of consistency in title, dates, and page numbers among and between entries, supplemental materials, and the *curriculum vitae*
- The Faculty Survey is not always compatible with the requirements of all forms used for promotion; for example, in Form 1-c used by County Agent faculty
- It is often not physically easy to input data to the forms; corrections can be difficult to make, forms are sometimes "locked" to data input, and extraneous characters sometimes appear
- Common terms, such as *works in progress*, *submitted*, *under review*, *accepted with revision*, etc., are not standardized in terms of definition nor are examples provided to facilitate input of data in appropriate categories
- The treatment of multi-author scholarly activities such as co-authored books, articles, conference presentations, etc., is not standard nor clearly defined
- Once Form 1 is generated from the Faculty Survey, faculty still have to work to correct formatting; on occasion, entire sections do not populate properly and must be retyped
- Faculty don't pay attention and make the same mistakes year after year; far too often forms are returned to professors for editorial reasons
- Consistency in formatting throughout the entire document (such as use of personal pronouns) is lacking

Some units surveyed remarked that, when assistance was needed, the office of the EVPAA provided excellent and immediate support. Others commented that use of the Faculty Survey solves many problems that were previously troublesome: it helps to reduce the number of times the same information is submitted for different purposes in different formats, thus improving efficiency and saving time. One respondent stated that generating Form 1-a is a collaborative process, and the automation of reporting frees up time that is now available for content review. Although one administrative assistant appreciates the utility of the Faculty Survey database, the formatting is unappealing and needs improvement, and another administrative assistant prefers to work solely from the downloaded form and would like to see this option maintained.

Questionnaire remarks concerning faculty ownership:

- New faculty members are aware of the promotion forms, but are unaware of the degree of detail and recordkeeping needed to complete them properly
- Faculty members do not pay attention or skim over instructions associated with the forms
- Faculty members do not attend workshops in which the criteria for the promotion forms are discussed
- Faculty members are unaware of or do not adhere to timelines for timely generation of promotion forms
- Faculty members (especially senior faculty members) are indifferent to the Faculty Survey. There is wide-spread resistance to using the database, and as a result, any problems with entering data and populating the promotion forms cannot be adequately addressed if the process is left too late in the promotion cycle
- Last minute data entry is sometimes due to a lack of communication or timely notice from chairs and at other times is due to general procrastination by the faculty member
- Staff assigned to assist faculty with the process can be overwhelmed, especially in cases in which the promotion forms are generated at the last minute

3.III. Some solutions

Following introduction of the Charge, Vice President Fernández and the subcommittee discussed steps that could be taken or more fully emphasized by UHR to facilitate the introduction and use of the online Faculty Survey database. To stress early adoption of the process, options include:

- Expand and emphasize the introduction to the promotion process (including Form 1 requirements and the online Faculty Survey database) at the *Faculty Welcome Event*. (The first of these was held in August 2010, and with plans by UHR to repeat annually, provides the opportunity for new faculty to meet with various department representatives on issues of concern to new hires.)
- Include on the UHR website *Gateway for New Faculty* (https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal/site/GNF): 1) language that speaks to the process of early adoption and maintenance of the Faculty Survey database by new hires, and 2) links to promotion forms, the Faculty Survey, and the New Brunswick Faculty Council memo to new faculty entitled *Preparation of Form 1a (or b,c,d,e) for reappointment and promotion decisions* (http://nbfc.rutgers.edu/Form1.htm)
- As part of the series of timed "welcome messages" to new hires forwarded by EVPAA Furmanski, include memos that stress early adoption of thorough recordkeeping and regular updates to the Faculty Survey database
- Ensure that information sessions on how to populate the database and promotion forms are regularly (perhaps annually) available on some level at all units on all three Rutgers campuses
- Explore ways in which to partner with the Camden and Newark campuses to deliver the same information in a structured, and to the greatest extent possible, uniform process

Specific recommendations for improving the process include:

- To reduce confusion and duplication, clearly outline and present examples of the types of data needed for each section of Form 1
- Define and standardize commonly used terms, such as *works in progress*, *submitted*, *under review*, *accepted with revision*, etc.
- Standardize and clearly define the treatment of multi-author scholarly activities such as co-authored books, articles, conference presentations, etc.
- Permit chronological or reverse chronological order input of data, as long consistency is observed
- Increase the flexibility of the teaching grid to provide a way to indicate reasons for lack of data (such as sabbaticals, course releases, etc.)
- Include a glossary of terms most likely to confuse junior faculty, such as *IDR, prior service, adjunct status, probationary year*, etc.
- Vet the forms to ensure that they can be easily filled in and edited and that one can cut and paste information from other documents
- Ensure that the Faculty Survey is compatible with the requirements of all forms (1-a through II-4) used for promotion
- Provide a final checklist for the candidate to proof the promotion forms before final submission
- Provide a detailed flow chart that illustrates the promotion process and the time frames for each part of the process
- Encourage faculty use of the Faculty Survey by providing software that formats output into documents that follow the style of the faculty member's discipline (e.g. APA, MLA, etc.)
- Improve the functioning of the search engine included in the Faculty Survey
- Require the completion of the Faculty Survey as part of the timeline for promotion and/or tenure packets
- Adapt the use of RU Core (Rutgers University Community Repository) University-wide

At the department level, chairs can ensure that discussions regarding the importance of Form 1 and the Faculty Survey are included in annual mentoring sessions for new and junior faculty.

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of the process is encouraging senior faculty members to regularly update the online Faculty Survey database as they would a *curriculum vitae* that is used for purposes other than promotion. Working through the technical issues of data input and seamless generation of reports (such as *curriculum vitae*) that are easily adapted to different formats might help to make this process more attractive. Other considerations include requiring the completion of the Faculty Survey as part of the timeline for promotion, and using the database as the sole basis of record for tenure and promotion, merit increases, and post-tenure review

4.   Recommendations

The FPAC makes the following recommendations regarding Form 1-a (and its analogs) and the online Faculty Survey database:

1.   Resolve technical issues that adversely affect the input and flexibility of Form 1-a and its analogs, and clarify by definition and example all instructions for completing such forms.

2.   Improve ease of data input as well as data output of the Faculty Survey into formats that suit other appropriate use.

3.   Ensure that communications regarding Form 1 and the Faculty Survey that target newly hired faculty (web-based and information sessions) are available and timely.

4.   Find ways to encourage faculty to take early and sustained ownership of the process. This includes, but is not limited to, annual mentoring for new and junior faculty members, and using the Faculty Survey as the basis of record for merit increases and post-tenure review.

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