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BACKGROUND FOR POST TENURE REVIEW PROCESS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION RELATED TO AUBURN UNIVERSITY'S POST-TENURE REVIEW PROCESS (PTR)

Post-tenure review policies have been adopted at many institutions of higher education across the USA in an effort to

restore public trust in academics. The American Association for Higher Education has tracked the progress and results of PTR in a series of comprehensive reports (Licata & Morreale, 2002; Licata & Brown, 2004; Licata & Morreale, 2006), and the American Association of University Professors (1999) has provided helpful commentary on procedures for PTR. There are two primary mechanisms for PTR. Universal PTR reviews all tenured faculty members within the university across a set period of time. Triggered PTR, on the other hand, calls for more extensive review of only those tenured faculty members whose annual reviews document deficiencies that need to be addressed. Both systems can be effective, but triggered systems are far more efficient in terms of effort, time, and cost. In order for a triggered system to be effective, however, a university must already have implemented an effective annual review system for faculty, given that the annual review serves as the trigger mechanism for post-tenure review.

During the 2006-2007 academic year the provost of Auburn University implemented a universal PTR mechanism on a pilot basis. This decision was made because an audit of AU's existing faculty review system indicated that considerable improvement in the process of annual evaluation was necessary before AU could move to a triggered mechanism. In 2007, the provost mandated minimum standards for faculty evaluation in every department, and a second audit of the faculty annual review process showed considerable improvement in methods used across the University.

Before the 2007- 2008 academic year the provost provided mandatory training for all department heads/chairs in how to conduct faculty annual reviews, but retained the universal PTR mechanism for one more year. Post-tenure review was carried out successfully in 2007-2008, but the universal mechanism proved to be cumbersome, time consuming, expensive, and inefficient. The clear improvement of the faculty annual review process made the implementation of the more efficient trigger mechanism feasible at Auburn University. Thus the 2008-2009 PTR process was one whereby more extensive review and planning was triggered by an overall unacceptable performance evaluation as documented during the faculty annual review process.

COMMENCEMENT OF THE POLICY

This policy became effective for the 2008-2009 academic year. Annual faculty evaluations conducted in Spring, 2008 (which considered the faculty member's work during calendar year 2007) were considered "year one" for the purpose of implementing this policy. Faculty whose performance was judged overall as "unacceptable" for calendar year 2007 were thus put on notice that a second overall evaluation of "unacceptable" occurring over the next five years (calendar years 2008-2012) would trigger PTR. Evaluations for years prior to 2007 were not considered under this triggering mechanism.

REFERENCES

American Association of University Professors. (1999). Post-tenure

review: An AAUP response. (This report can be found on pages 60-66 of AAUP Policy Documents & Reports, 10th ed. Washington, DC: American Association of University Professors, 2006.)

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Auburn University's Post-Tenure Review Process is located in Chapter 3 of the Auburn University *Faculty Handbook*.

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