

University Faculty Affairs Committee.

Motion: We propose changes to language in Section 6 “Faculty Evaluation Procedures” (see attachments with and without “track changes” from the original wording).

History of the motion, and rationale for proposed changes:

In May of 2018, the UFAC received a request from the Dean Keith Mellinger and CAS department chairs to examine section 6 of the Faculty Handbook and Faculty Evaluation Procedures, in particular the efficacy of merit pay, the relevancy of the APWF weighting form, as well as inconsistency in evaluation across departments. We were asked to consider in any changes we propose, the importance of these evaluations in tenure and promotion procedures, and whether or not to treat faculty at the rank of professor differently from lower ranks in annual evaluation.

Our proposal is meant to recognize the good work of the majority of our faculty, and to help guide junior faculty towards promotion and tenure. In the three areas of evaluation (teaching, professional activity, and service) we propose three rating levels that set clearer distinctions among what activities “meet expectations,” those that “exceed expectations,” and propose remediation and eventual consequences for faculty whose performance “does not meet expectations” in one or more of the areas. These three ratings in the three areas of evaluation—teaching, professional activity, and service—are the basis for an overall rating of satisfactory/unsatisfactory. Under the proposed system, the APWF weighting form is no longer necessary, so it has been eliminated.

It is through the overall rating that this plan addresses the thorny issue of merit pay. The basic premise of this proposal is that all faculty employed by the university deserve to receive the same cost-of-living increases. This proposal holds that merit pay, if ever restored to the university, should be applied evenly over and above cost-of-living to all faculty whose overall performance is deemed “satisfactory.” Faculty whose overall performance is “unsatisfactory” are denied merit pay, and also run the risk of non-renewal, of not achieving promotion or tenure, or of being subject to post-tenure review, as has already been the policy in Section 6.

In November of 2014, the UFAC drafted a motion to the UFC regarding salary increases after many years of no increases for faculty. In that motion, the committee cited a 2013 Brookings Institution study of merit pay in the public sector (“Merit-based Pay and Employee Motivation in Federal Agencies”) that found that economic incentive plans do not improve organizational effectiveness or employee satisfaction in such organizations. We believe that this plan recognizes the hard work and merit of our faculty, while it also honors their commitment to the public mission of our university.