ACADEMIC Leader

NOVEMBER 2007
VOLUME 23, NUMBER 11

THE NEWSLETTER FOR ACADEMIC DEANS AND DEPARTMENT CHAIRS

Encouraging Faculty Scholarship at the Comprehensive University: What's the Chair to Do?

By Gibson Darden, EdD

Faculty members at comprehensive universities have unique challenges. As opposed to those at primarily teaching or research institutions, faculty members at comprehensive universities must themselves be comprehensive, or balanced in their productivity (see Henderson, 2007). That is, they must be better than average at teaching, service, and scholarship. In my experience as a department chair, the most challenging area for faculty to achieve and maintain is scholarly production. This article provides strategies for department chairs to promote scholarship among the faculty at comprehensive universities.

Challenges to scholarship at the comprehensive university

It is helpful for chairs to recognize and/or reaffirm the forces working against faculty scholarly production. Several of these forces are concurrent with increased expectations for scholarship. First (and most obvious), faculty members at comprehensive institutions maintain **high teaching loads**, generally between three and five courses per semester.

Second, institutions have been trending toward increasing expectations in the area of **community service**. Institutions are asking faculty to deliver or extend public engagement or service learning projects to the community.

Third, there is an increased emphasis on student **satisfaction and retention**. Institutions are increasingly pressured to retain students and to be accountable for their success and satisfaction. This often translates to faculty trying and/or documenting new instructional strategies.

Fourth, there are increased opportunities, rewards, and, sometimes, expectations for units and/or faculty to become **self-sustainable** via grants and/or external funding.

Finally, faculty at most comprehensive institutions are increasingly working with a **dynamic leadership**. Provosts, deans, and chairs are serving shorter terms. As such, faculty and chairs are subject to changes in expectations and priorities. Some faculty might perceive a "moving target" with respect to scholarly expectations. Indeed, the rules may have changed, or be changing, for some faculty. Remaining cognizant of these forces, chairs can work with them to effectively promote faculty scholarship. I have identified three primary strategies.

Strategy 1: Put the right person in the right place

Okay, so this might seem an easy one to suggest—just hire the right person. Most chairs will get opportunities to hire new tenure-track faculty, and I am convinced this is an area that does not get enough attention. It is a bit of a matchmaking process. I have helped hire six new faculty members in my five-year tenure as chair. Most important is the match between the institutional (and unit) mission and the faculty member. Our primary question should be "Can this individual be successful here?"

The right person must have the right balance of teaching, scholarship, and service. This takes extensive research and background checking by the search committee. Finding the match also requires a deep understanding of your own institution and its reward and support systems. Once understanding of both is achieved, then the matching can commence. This matching does not run counter to my philosophy to always hire someone better than we are. We should try to hire someone who is more balanced and a better fit with institutional and unit expectations than we are.

What else is important when seeking the right person for scholarly productivity at the comprehensive institution?

PAGE 6 ▸

In This Issue

A MAGNA PUBLICATION

ACADEMIC Leader

The Newsletter for Academic Deans and Department Chairs

PRESIDENT: William Haight; whaight@magnapubs.com
PUBLISHER: David Burns; dburns@magnapubs.com
MANAGING EDITOR: Rob Kelly;
robkelly@magnapubs.com
E-mail editorial comments or questions to Rob Kelly, or call him at 608-227-8120.
ART DIRECTOR: Debra Lovelien
CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGER: Mark Beyer

Academic Leader (ISSN 8750-7730) is published monthly by Magna Publications, Inc., 2718 Dryden Drive, Madison, WI 53704. Customer Service: 800-433-0499 or 608-246-3580; Email: *custserv@magnapubs.com*. Editorial: 608-246-3580; Fax: 608-246-3597. Website: www.magnapubs.com. One-year subscription: $198. Discounts for multiple subscriptions. POSTMASTER: Send change of address to Academic Leader, 2718 Dryden Drive, Madison, WI 53704.

To order back issues, call Customer Service at 800-433-0499. Back issues cost $20.00 each ($179 for the previous year's complete collection), plus shipping and handling in the US. You can pay with MasterCard, VISA, Discover, or American Express.

The Right to Know: Graduation Rates Explored

By Bob Cipriano, PhD, and Richard Riccardi

The high cost of a college education comes up in idle conversation among university colleagues, is written about in the print media, serves as grist for television and radio commentary, and is the topic of heated dialogue at get-togethers among parents of college-age children. What makes a certain private school worth $50,000 per year? The cost of tuition and fees at the more elite universities ranges between $35,000 and $45,000 per year. People in their 50s and 60s wax nostalgic when they remember the cost of their first home, $20,000, which is now the cost of one semester of education, and the cost of an automobile, $2,000, which is now the cost of only a few weeks of school at some institutions.

The ever-escalating cost of an education is not unique to prestigious private universities. There was a 14 percent increase in tuition and fees at many public universities in the fall semester of 2005. Consequently, there is a blurring of the differences between private and public universities. We believe that the affordability of an education is a major challenge that all people in the academy must face.

With the costs of attending a university escalating exponentially, it is logical to assume that it is in the best interest of students (and their parents) to graduate as quickly as possible. The reality, however, is far removed from this enviable goal. In fact, the national trend is that only 54 percent of students entering four-year colleges graduate within **six years**—and this figure is even lower for blacks and Hispanics. Graduation rates have stagnated over recent decades, while enrollment has climbed significantly. This, of course, requires students (albeit only slightly more than half) and/or their parents to pay the additional cost of two more years of college than the old standard of four years. The additional two, three, or four years it may take for a student to graduate with a degree requires working full and/or part time or taking more student loans. The result is that students are graduating with bachelor's degrees and are in debt $30,000 or more before they become assimilated into the workforce.

A concomitant effect of the high cost of a college education is that students are more financially advantaged today than they were at any point in the last several decades. A study that examined 40 years of data from UCLA's national survey of entering undergraduates at four-year colleges and universities indicated that the students came from families with a median income 60 percent higher than the national average. This raises a multitude of questions regarding access, fairness, diversity, etc. It is interesting to note that the United States has slipped from first to eighth place among industrialized nations in degree attainment!

In the February 11, 2007, issue of *The New York Times* there was an article by Sam Dillon titled "Troubles Grow for a University Built on Profits" that said that the University of Phoenix became the nation's largest private university by delivering high profits to investors and a low-overhead education to midcareer workers seeking college degrees. The university relies more on part-time instructors than all but a few postsecondary institutions and races students through course work in about half the time that traditional universities do. Approximately **95 percent** of the instructors at the University of

PAGE 3 ▸

GRADUATION RATES...
From Page 2

Phoenix are part time. It is instructive to note that Phoenix has a graduation rate of 16 percent for first-time undergraduates who obtain a degree within six years.

We began to wonder if there was a correlation between the high percentage of part-time faculty and the very low graduation rate (16 percent overall, 6 percent at the Southern California campus, 4 percent among online students). Historically, part-time instructors have not been invested and engaged in the universities where they teach. For the great majority of part-time instructors, their primary (only) responsibility is to teach a course during a specified time frame. They are employed at their "real" full-time job somewhere else. Therefore, they often run in and run out of their classes in time to get back to work. They do not serve on department or university committees, provide no service to the community, and (especially) do not advise students.

During the 2007 fall semester, all full-time faculty (N=917) and department chairs (N=118) from the four state universities comprising the Connecticut State University system were surveyed to determine what factors department chairs consider important in making personnel decisions (e.g., tenure, promotion in rank, reappointment) for full-time faculty within their department. A concomitant objective of the survey was to ascertain those factors that faculty perceive as important in personnel decisions (e.g., obtaining tenure, promotion in rank, reappointment). A total of 297 faculty returned the survey, or 32 percent. A total of 76 department chairs returned the survey, or 65 percent. The return rates for each of the four CSU campuses are indicated next:

Cohort	CSU	Number Mailed	Number Returned	% of Returns
Faculty	CCSU	187	99	50%
	ECSU	183	49	27%
	SCSU	339	102	30%
	WCSU	198	47	24%
Chairs	CCSU	39	20	51%
	ECSU	16	7	44%
	SCSU	38	32	84%
	WCSU	25	17	68%

Respondents were asked to rate each of 21 factors as either a major factor, a minor factor, or not a factor in personnel decisions. In light of the above discussion concerning graduation rates, two of the survey responses are illuminating: interaction with students and student advising. The discussion/analysis that follows will pertain to only Southern Connecticut State University, the largest of the four in the CSU system, with approximately 12,000 students. It is noted and emphasized that, overall, SCSU graduates 34.5 percent of students in six years. The graduation rate for blacks is 29 percent, for Hispanics 28.2 percent, and for whites 35.7 percent. Of interest is the fact that tuition and fees at SCSU rose 86 percent for undergraduates and 108 percent for graduate students between 2000 and 2006. The explosive increase in cost has worked against many students remaining in school—simply because they cannot afford to.

Analysis

Overall, there was little disagreement between faculty and department chairs in most of the 21 factors they responded to. For example, 99 percent of the chairs and 93 percent of the faculty indicated that classroom teaching was a major factor in personnel decisions. In addition, 75 percent of the chairs and 72 percent of the faculty reported that research was a major factor, and 73 percent of chairs and 71 percent of faculty said that publication was a major factor in acquiring tenure and promotion in rank. However, 66 percent of the chairs and only 20 percent of the faculty indicated that interaction with students was a major factor. Further, merely 39 percent of the chairs and 27 percent of the faculty indicated that student advising was a major factor to be considered in personnel decisions.

Could there be a correlation between interacting with and advising students and the high percentage of students who fail to graduate within a reasonable time frame, or graduate at all? Perhaps university-wide tenure and promotion committees could include advising students as a criterion for gaining tenure and promotion in rank. It is clear that this issue warrants full discussion concerning the merits of such an approach.

Bob Cipriano is chair of the department of recreation and leisure studies and Richard Riccardi is director of the office of management information and research at Southern Connecticut State University. Contact Bob Cipriano at ciprianor1@southernct.edu. ▼

Enabling Quality Improvement Where Faculty Live: Change Through Access, Academic Audit, and Alignment

By Larry Gould, PhD, C. B. Crawford, PhD, Jeff Briggs, EdD, Glen McNeil, M.S., RD/LD

Affecting quality improvement at the departmental level is a substantial challenge for higher education administration. Planned quality improvement has often been reprioritized to make room for budget necessities, and at the same time ad hoc change is sometimes resented and unsettling. Cultural change, which quality improvement requires, must be orchestrated through effective planning, thorough communication, visionary leadership, and strategic embedding within the deepest layers of each unique culture. When higher education institutions actually accomplish significant cultural evolution, it is generally an artifact of three variables: preparation/planning, timing, and motivation. In the case of Fort Hays State University (FHSU), these factors provided a rich environment for a successful four-year quality improvement effort:

- Year of Academic Leadership (2004–2005)
- Year of the Department 1: Audit (2005–2006)
- Year of the Department 2: Audit (2006–2007)
- Year of Strategic Alignment (2007–2008)

Need and context

Two major needs were identified and drove the project. First, quality improvement principles were abstract for most faculty, and departments needed an effective initiative that they could generalize to later improvement efforts at the department level. Essentially, the goal was to ask faculty to do quality improvement where they live. Second, it was perceived that there was a need for departments to meaningfully review curriculum according to a uniform model as a substitute for state-level program review. Our four-year commitment sought to transform the academic cultural milieu by mastering the following objectives:

1. Provide a common knowledge base for academic leaders,
2. Position department leaders and faculty to work intensively on a limited scope quality improvement project—an academic audit (Massy, 2003),
3. Support the continuing operation with timely knowledge sharing and regular reporting/feedback, and
4. Enlarge the agenda to include horizontally and vertically aligned department/college goals.

Access: year of academic leadership

In June 2004, the Dean/Chair Orientation series was introduced, with the objective of developing human capital and departmental/college leadership. As conceptualized, the goal of this series (now titled the Academy of Academic Leadership) was to provide access to knowledge and process as well as to enable networking with decision-makers. The consensus-derived topics ranged from the institutional mission and goals to soft skills for effective personnel management, and specifically covered the following:

- Role of the dean and chair
- Class schedule/virtual college/summer school
- Academic calendar
- Tenure process
- Action plans/department improvement
- AQIP for the department/college
- Searches and hiring
- Research and service responsibilities
- Budget responsibilities
- Strategic planning
- Teaching evaluation process
- Course management system
- Refocus on recruiting students
- University policies
- Academic advising
- Grade appeals
- Promotion process
- International virtual college
- International students
- Affinity diagrams
- Merit procedures
- Council of chairs and first principles
- Department/college annual report
- Linking department, college, and university missions
- Course scheduling and conflicts
- Curriculum and general education
- Faculty orientation process
- Virtual college: operations and paperwork
- Graduate council/faculty
- Department annual report

Academic audit: year of the department

The academic audit, first articulated by William Massy, is a powerful tool useful for academic departments and institutions interested in meaningful review of academic programs. Massy (2003) fully integrates consideration of cost/benefit, but our academic audit maintained a simpler course intended to look at just the five quality education processes for at least one degree program in every academic department.

First, departments were asked to review the desired learning objectives of their program. Second, faculty critically examined the program curricula with the explicit goal of mapping them to learning outcomes. Third, departments were asked to explore the teaching and learning processes, mapping those processes to the curricula and outcomes. Fourth, faculty were asked to articulate specific assessment methods mapped to course

PAGE 5 ▸

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT...
From Page 4

content and teaching methods. Finally, faculty were asked how the assessment results would be utilized as a way to improve quality within the program. Four exigent circumstances made the academic audit an appropriate methodology for leveraged change:

- Required periodic reflection on the program's Affinity Diagram
- Rapid expansion of distance education with varying levels of maturity
- Inconsistent assessment of learning among multiple-section courses
- Assessment mandate with inconsistent application and uncoordinated, decentralized accountability

The purpose of the academic audit was to assist faculty in working through their familiar academic programs while *learning about and using educational quality processes most relevant to faculty roles and responsibilities.* It was assumed that a focus on a common strategic task for all faculty—the academic audit—had the greatest potential to meet the explicit goals of the quality improvement initiative (Massy, Graham, and Short, 2007). The academic audit facilitated horizontal alignment across the participating departments and faculty. In addition, the emphasis on quality educational processes was conceived as a device for developing vertical alignment with institutional initiatives as well as greater knowledge and familiarity with quality management.

In summer 2005, the Provost's Council approved the plan and communicated it to department chairs for implementation in January 2006. Feedback revealed that nine of 30 departments would not be able to commit the necessary time to complete their goals during the first Year of the Department. Upon completion of planning and early implementation, 21 departments signed on to the 18-month year of the department 1 and nine departments signed on to the 12-month Year of the Department 2.

The following list details the scheduled rollout and quality improvement seminars associated with the audit process:

- Conducting the Academic Audit
- Affinity Diagrams
- Mapping and Measuring Process
- Academic Auditing for Faculty
- Refresher/Jump-Start
- Learning Objectives
- Assessment Basics
- Advanced Assessment/Best Practice
- Curriculum Mapping

Alignment: year of strategic alignment

The final themed year builds on the quality improvement skills of faculty and chairs. The explicit goal is for the department to strategically align its priorities and activities to institutional goals. Specifically, departments will be asked to internally align their goals and indicators to their newly reviewed and revised program curricula and assessment methods. Second, they will want to align their goals vertically within the institution. Sharing best practices and fostering conversation will provide the opportunity to share solutions with other departments. Sharing successes from the academic audit will lead to creation of a knowledge base for departments that utilize course curricula from other departments to help meet the needs of their students.

Departments will be asked to align departmental/curricular goals to the goals of the university. Course and program changes do not occur within a vacuum. In many cases, a unilateral change in learning objectives in a general education type class will have implications for larger institutional assessment results. It is important to share these changes when institution-wide changes are anticipated. It is also important for faculty to understand the role of their department in meeting institutional goals. Finding ways for departments to directly impact an institutional goal provides a learning opportunity for faculty and will likely increase their commitment to both departmental and institutional goals.

Implications for department chairs

Each of the three institutional focal points exposes the need for meaningful professional development in the chair's rank. In the Year of Access, chairs were most effective if they participated with an eagerness to learn broader aspects of the organization and adapt to information presented. In this phase, the key was for chairs to inform themselves in preparation for implementing their portions of a larger structured change initiative.

In the Year of the Academic unit, chairs needed advanced learning in building vision, clarifying resources, possibly mediating conflict, inspiring consensus, and codifying and sharing abstract ideas such as learner outcomes and assessment practice. Finally, the year of alignment calls upon chairs to assimilate and present results to peers, cooperate with peers, share best practices, evaluate and react to unanticipated problems related to curriculum change, and facilitate faculty learning about curriculum changes and assessment.

References

Massy, W. (2003). *Honoring the Trust: Quality and Cost Containment in Higher Education*. Williston, Vt.: Anker Publishing.

Massy, W., Graham, S.W., and Short, P.M. (2007). *Academic Quality Work: A Handbook for Improvement.* Bolton, Mass.: Anker Publishing.

Zemsky, R., Wegner, G.R., and Massy, W. (2005). *Remaking the American University: Market-Smart and Mission-Centered.* New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.

Larry Gould (lgould@fhsu.edu) *is the provost, C.B. Crawford* (ccrawfor@fhsu.edu) *is assistant provost for quality management, Jeff Briggs* (jbriggs@fhsu.edu) *is dean of the College of Life Sciences, and Glen McNeil* (gmcneil@fhsu.edu) *is chair of the department of health and human performance at Fort Hays State University in Kansas.* ▼

ENCOURAGING SCHOLARSHIP..
From Page 1

First, look for a person who is already an effective communicator and teacher. Mentoring a faculty member toward effective teaching is difficult and time-intensive and ultimately could undermine scholarly productivity. Second, look for a person with a collaborative spirit. Third, look for someone with the personal qualities of perseverance, flexibility, and intellectual curiosity. These characteristics will serve the person well when he or she attempts to balance the comprehensive expectations and when leadership and rules change.

Finally, I have found it helpful to reconsider the focused or narrow line of research of some faculty. While it can be productive, often it does not match the balanced expectations of your institution. While scholarly productivity might not be the issue, other challenges could arise with narrow lines of scholarship.

Strategy 2: Collaborate

Few things predict scholarly productivity better than collaboration with other faculty. One of the problems with narrow or focused lines of research is that they may not be collaborative with other faculty. For our most recent hire, we decided to pursue a person with a focused line of research. However, this exercise scientist had a reputation for working with other faculty in conducting related studies, and also stepped outside of his line of research to publish in their discipline. Since his arrival, he has involved two other faculty members in his scholarship, and his research has the potential to engage other faculty in the future. The fact that many high-level funding agencies now require interdisciplinary collaboration for grant proposals suggests that chairs should find ways to promote collaboration.

One way to encourage collaboration is to do so intentionally. Several articles have been written on strategies for both inter- and intradisciplinary collaboration (e.g., Doprano et al., 2005). Mentoring plans and writing circles are two examples of successful initiatives. I have found success promoting collaboration, and ultimately scholarship, through "unintentional" means not necessarily labeled as scholarship. For example, in a comprehensive youth sport program we offer, several faculty from the disciplines of sport management, exercise science, physical education, and health promotion are involved.

We will soon embark on a coaching education conference in which the "experts" from our different disciplines will share important knowledge with youth and scholastic coaches. They have to collaborate in order to make their disciplinary content usable for practitioners. We took advantage of our institution's internal "Celebration of Inquiry" conference and gathered faculty from psychology, exercise science, physical education, and sports/fitness management to discuss the concept of motivation in sport and exercise from a cross-disciplinary perspective. We have begun to convert these collaborative efforts to peer-reviewed scholarship. Scholarship was not the primary objective of these efforts but instead emerged as a natural byproduct of collaborative efforts.

Strategy 3: Find (and reward) scholarship in the darnedest places

Most comprehensive institutions reward a wide variety of scholarship, as long as it is peer-reviewed or refereed. I find that broadening the concept of scholarship (and rewarding it) is worth the effort. Service-based scholarship has been promoted by others (e.g., Feingold, 1997) and is a way for faculty to connect scholarship to other efforts. Let me provide a couple more examples to highlight my point.

One faculty member embraced the institution's mentoring initiative, by which college students mentor at-risk students in local K–12 public schools. The mentoring is tied to course objectives and is designed to benefit both sets of students. When the faculty member finally realized the potential to convert the mentoring to scholarship, she was motivated to present and publish her work in appropriate disciplinary outlets.

Another faculty member thrived on taking students to national professional conferences. We began to discuss ideas about the process of encouraging and facilitating this valuable experience and eventually co-authored a refereed article in a professional journal on the topic. This faculty member found scholarship in service.

As a final example, our exercise science lab conducts fitness tests as part of a community fitness testing service program. This generates traditional data sets and attractive cross-sectional or longitudinal comparisons. Faculty members are collaborating on structuring the data collection so that it has more potential for future scholarship. It should be clear that valued scholarship in most comprehensive institutions is not restricted to traditional data-based research publications. Some of the most effective and sustainable scholarship links faculty strengths and/or interests in teaching or service to the scholarly artifact.

While the challenges are great at the comprehensive university, there is also considerable opportunity and reward for chairs to help faculty succeed in such a balanced and dynamic environment.

References

Bensimon, E., Ward, K., and Sanders, K. (2000). *The Department Chair's Role in Developing New Faculty into Teachers and Scholars.* Bolton, Mass.: Anker Publishing.

Daprano, C., Bruening, J., Pastore, D., Greenwell, T., Dixon, M., Ko, Y., Jordan, J. Lilienthal, S., and Turner, B. (2005). "Collaboration in Sport Research: A Case from the Field." *Quest*, 57(3), 300-314.

Feingold, R. S. (1997). "Service-Based Scholarship." *Quest,* 49(4), 351-354.

Henderson, B.B. (2007). *Teaching at the People's University: An Introduction to the State Comprehensive University.* Bolton, Mass.: Anker Publishing.

Gibson Darden is a professor and chair of the department of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation at Coastal Carolina University. Contact him at gfdarden@coastal.edu. ▼

Improving Documentation for Promotion and Tenure

By Jeffrey L. Buller, PhD

At most colleges and universities, the documentation that faculty members submit when applying for tenure or promotion is so massive as to be burdensome at the same time that it is often unhelpful to the review committee. It is not at all uncommon for applicants to submit three or more full binders of documentation for a promotion application, including internal and external letters of support, summaries of student course evaluations, syllabi for all courses, copies of all publications, evaluations made by supervisors and peers during all previous academic years, a complete set of annual reviews, an updated résumé, lists of committee assignments and service contributions performed, term-by-term teaching loads, grant proposals submitted, publication contracts for works not yet in print, and a wealth of other documentation. At some schools, faculty members will include in their portfolios all the thank-you notes and letters of congratulations that they have received from all of their supervisors, colleagues, and students.

The result of this practice is that candidates spend weeks or even months amassing materials, and then promotion and tenure committees have incredible masses of documentation to read. If you ask about this excessive documentation, most committees issue statements along the lines of “We read every single document submitted to us.” Nevertheless, even that response poses a problem. Either the committee is being disingenuous and not doing what it claims to be doing (thus probably missing important information as it skims through multiple volumes of material) or it actually is reading every word submitted to it (thus spending time reading thank-you notes, multiple copies of nearly identical course syllabi, and duplicates of information that already appears in the candidate’s curriculum vitae, when its members could be devoting that time to teaching and research). In other words, all too many tenure and promotion systems today require candidates to spend far too much time amassing far too much information for committees to review far too little in a process that is far too cumbersome. Is there any alternative?

Administrators can help inspire much-needed reform of the tenure and promotion processes at their institutions if they begin discussions of reducing the workload of both candidates and committees in the following three ways.

1. Institutions should never require candidates to supply information or documentation that can be readily obtained elsewhere. It should go without saying that forcing candidates to gather material that is easily available elsewhere is not the best use of the candidates’ time. But such a requirement is also detrimental to the committee’s work. For instance, committees may feel obliged to review documentation, not because it is particularly useful or informative, but simply because the candidate has gone to the trouble to collect it. Common examples of information that, at most institutions, candidates should not be asked to gather include aggregated student evaluation scores and term-by-term course loads. Where centralized sources of this information are available, these sources tend to be far more consistent in the way in which that information is presented; for instance, the office of institutional research is likely to calculate averages or median scores on student evaluations in a consistent manner for all faculty members, whereas individuals may use any number of methods, producing results that are misleading to the committee where they attempt to make comparisons.

2. Candidates should be asked to provide a sampling of material that reflects each candidate’s best contributions. When applicants for promotion or tenure submit large quantities of material, there tends to be very little distinction in their documentation between the extremely important and the relatively insignificant. In an attempt to provide the committee with everything that its members could possibly want, candidates run the risk of having their truly important material become lost in the sheer welter of their documentation. This problem can best be avoided if documentation guidelines are revised so that candidates provide a selection of their materials along with a justification of why those materials are important. For instance, candidates could be asked to list all the products of their scholarship (books, articles, presentations, performances, and the like), but also to submit documentary evidence of their three most important scholarly contributions, along with a statement about why those items are significant. Rather than submitting syllabi for all of their courses, candidates could be asked to provide the three best syllabi they have written, accompanied by a paragraph that explains why these particular examples are of high quality. Focusing requests in this way encourages candidates, not merely to “dump” everything that they have collected onto a review committee, but rather to reflect on what they believe to be important, why it is important, and what constitutes high achievement in their disciplines.

3. Candidates should be asked to supply fewer documents, but they should also be asked to annotate those documents. Another problem with reviewing multiple binders filled with unedited documents is that, although they contain a great deal of data, they do not always provide a great deal of information. For instance, unless a member of a review committee happens to be very familiar with the discipline in question, he or she is unlikely to know which journals in a field are really important,

PAGE 8 ▸

Academic Department Chair: Advertisement and Summary of Responsibilities

By Margaret F. Karsten

Wanted: Chairperson for large academic department populated with rugged individualists

Required: The successful candidate must have a poker face, unlimited energy, no ego, good juggling skills, exceptional acting ability, excellent listening skills, a high tolerance for frustration, thick skin, and infinite patience.

Preferred: Superb conciliation skills, ability to function well on little sleep, no vindictiveness, ability to cajole diverse constituents, warped sense of humor, great smile, ability to obfuscate

Responsibilities:

15% Obsesses about ways to improve student learning
15% Begs to secure resources for the department
15% Debates at length to convince others of the correctness of the department's position
10% Fights losing battles for just causes before riding off into the sunset
8% Badgers people, without becoming obnoxious, to achieve goals
8% Toots his/her own horn and that of the department
8% Delegates all undesirable tasks to others
5% Spins yarns and puts spin on events
4% Disagrees without becoming disagreeable
4% Plays a respectable golf game
2% Pounds on table and stomps on floor to emphasize major points
2% Provides chocolate to department members and their friends and relatives
2% Blows whistle when necessary
2% Works magic and practices hypnosis when nothing else is effective

Location: The heights of the ivory tower, where thin air has been known to affect the brain. Head must be in the clouds that are visible from the upper floors.

Margaret F. Karsten is a professor in the Department of Business and Accounting at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville. ▼

PROMOTION AND TENURE...
From Page 7

which conferences do not accept every proposal submitted, and which courses tend to evoke lower scores on evaluations primarily because students resent having to take them. For this reason, an annotated résumé—one that includes acceptance rates for each journal in which the faculty member has published, essential information about the conferences where the candidate has presented, and background about how the candidate's courses fit into the overall curriculum of the discipline—can end up revealing far more to the committee than huge stacks of non-annotated documents. In a similar way, an annotated syllabus, describing how and why the instructor has improved the course over time, can tell the committee a great deal about the individual's quality of instruction and can be much more helpful all those notes from students reading "Good professor! I really liked this class."

In other words, documentation for promotion and tenure applications can be significantly improved if those who are responsible for setting policies would begin asking, "What insight do we hope to gain from the supporting material provided by the applicant that we simply cannot obtain elsewhere?" This same question should be addressed whenever documentation is requested from any source. For instance, when contacting outside reviews, it is less helpful to ask for a general letter of evaluation than to pose questions that cannot be answered internally. Thus, depending on the size of the program, you may need to ask external reviewers whether the faculty member has been active in the appropriate professional organizations for that discipline. You may need to inquire whether the candidate's level of research seems suitable for that discipline and whether it is being submitted to the right publishers and in the right journals. Reviewers may not think of addressing these questions specifically in their letters, unless they are formally asked to do so. You can always include a question like "Is there anything else about this candidate's professional performance that you would like to bring to the attention of the committee?" as a way of also soliciting a more general type of recommendation.

Most evaluation committees can give thorough attention to perhaps 50 to 75 pages of well-chosen documentation for each candidate they are considering for tenure or promotion. Rarely can committees master the thousands of pages that most applicants tend to gather into multiple binders. As a result, establishing policies so that they have candidates submit a far more focused but far more informative set of materials thus makes the process less burdensome for both candidates and committee alike, at the same time that it helps each candidate make the strongest case possible.

Jeffrey L. Buller is dean of the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College at Florida Atlantic University. He is the author of The Essential Department Chair: A Practical Guide to College Administration (2006), The Essential Academic Dean: A Practical Guide to College Leadership (2007), and The Essential College Professor: A Practical Guide to an Academic Career *(forthcoming). (All are published by Jossey-Bass.)* ▼