

From: APAFT Committee

To: Executive Committee

Date: Mar 9, 2011

Re: Report on Charge 6 of the APAFT Committee

*Charge 6: Review current survey instrument used to evaluate academic deans and determine whether the Executive Committee should appoint an ad hoc task force to revise the instrument (PPM 1-17, V).*

**Discussion:** The APAFT committee has reviewed the survey instrument and has had extensive discussions about it. The committee's general impressions are that the purpose of the survey instrument must be clearly specified, the review process made transparent, consequences of survey outcomes spelled out, and its results shared with the faculty and the dean. Below are some specific comments.

1. The purpose of the survey instrument and how the results of the survey are to be used by the Advisory Committee and the Provost need to be more clearly stated. (See report on Charge 7)
  - a. For example, would a low rating at some specified level affect the pay level or re-appointment of a dean?
2. To our knowledge, the validity of the survey instrument is unknown. However, this validity is clearly contingent on comment 1 (above) because survey design may differ depending on the purpose and intended use of the instrument. Related concerns follow:
  - a. To our knowledge, the survey was not designed by experts in survey techniques and was not designed to serve a specified purpose. Also, it is unclear how data from the survey are analyzed and in what manner conclusions are drawn.
  - b. The current survey instrument does not address the overall level of faculty confidence in the dean. Is this part of the purpose of the instrument?
  - c. The large number, differential breadth, and variety of questions on the survey appear to dilute the significance of critical questions.
  - d. The survey instrument does not address the role of the dean in fund raising and outreach activities, but it is our impression that these activities are increasingly important duties for deans.
  - e. It is unclear how the weightings given by faculty members to survey questions are used, if at all, by the Advisory Committee and the Provost. (See report on Charge 7)
  - f. The process for adding college-specific questions needs to be clarified, especially with regard to the role of faculty in review of deans and purpose of the instrument. (See report on Charge 7)

**Recommendations:** Based on our review, we recommend that the Executive Committee appoint an ad hoc task force to revise the current instrument. However, we believe that appointment of this task force should not occur until decisions are made regarding our recommendations for revision of PPM 1-17 (see report on Charge 7). In addition, we recommend the following regarding the task force and its activities:

1. The task force should include at least one member with expertise in survey design and implementation.
2. The task force should review any changes made to PPM 1-17 with regards to the purpose of the survey instrument and its role in the evaluation process.
3. The task force should review instruments used for faculty evaluation of deans at peer institutions.
4. As part of the revision process, we recommend that the task force consider the following to ensure the validity of the survey:
  - a. Grouping questions into categories by topic and importance, with possible overall ratings for each category. This can also help with recommendation in part b.
  - b. Rewriting questions to include one idea per question.
  - c. Adding questions related to the role of the dean in fund raising and outreach activities.
  - d. Putting a mechanism in place to add questions to address ever changing concerns. For example, a pre-survey can solicit suggestions. This can be combined with part e.
  - e. Clarifying the process of adding questions specific to each college.
  - f. Adding a question addressing the overall level of faculty confidence in the dean, such as: Would you recommend that the dean be reappointed? The committee considers this question to be essential in increasing faculty input as stated in the reports of charges 5 and 7.