
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
FOR EVALUATION OF DEPARTMENT HEADS
IN THE COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

APRIL 1998
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THE DEPARTMENT HEAD REVIEW PROCESS

1.0 Mechanism for Initiating the Review

Under normal circumstances, the performance of the head of each department in the College of Engineering will be evaluated in the fifth year after appointment or reappointment. The evaluation will follow the general guidelines provided in the faculty handbook and in Policy No 6100.

The schedule of the Department Head reviews is entered on the College calendar.

The Dean will notify each department head well in advance of the review.

The Office of the Dean will be responsible for initiating the regular review of the department head and for the election of the departmental representatives to serve on an Evaluation Team.

Following election of the departmental representatives and approval of the senior faculty members and the administrator, the Dean will call a meeting of the Evaluation Team for the purpose of discussing evaluation procedures and electing a chair from among the departmental representatives.

In addition to the mandatory five-year review, an evaluation may be initiated any time by the Dean at his/her discretion or at the request of one-third of the tenure-track faculty in the department. A department head in his/her first term may also request an earlier informal review to provide a midterm assessment of his/her performance.

2.0 Evaluation Team

The evaluation of the department head will be carried out by an Evaluation Team that consists of the following five members:

- 3 tenure-track departmental faculty, elected by the departmental tenure-track faculty,
- 1 senior faculty member from another department within the College that is acceptable to the tenure-track faculty, the department head being reviewed and the Dean, and
- 1 administrative representative appointed by the Dean to act as a facilitator.

This Evaluation Team is responsible for collecting information, preparing a letter report for the Dean and for delivering the results of the evaluation to the faculty of the department.

3.0 Criteria

Of particular importance is that the department head is a member of the faculty. Therefore, each department head should continue to participate in some of the activities that are expected of regular faculty members at the same rank. The faculty handbook states, *"The individual is also the department's or division's academic leader and is responsible for the character and quality of the department's academic programs. As an academic leader, the head is responsible for understanding and discussing with the faculty and students current issues and directions of the discipline or profession."* This requires that a department head maintain some level of currency in his/her profession. Therefore, the department head will be reviewed for both his/her performance as the manager of the department and as a faculty member.

The following items are thought to be the most important criteria to be used for evaluating the performance as the departmental manager:

- Vision
- Faculty recruitment, evaluation and development
- Staff recruitment, evaluation and development
- Resource allocation
- Morale and attitude
- Resource generation
- Communication

The criteria for evaluation of performance as a faculty member will be similar to all faculty evaluations, appropriate to the time allocated for faculty activities.

4.0 Scope of Inputs

The information gathered by the Evaluation Team should be focused, with primary emphasis on faculty with the rank of Assistant Professor or above. The Evaluation Team will make a concerted effort to insure that there is a high (more than fifty percent) response rate by the faculty. In carrying out a review of the department head, the goal is to assess performance, not popularity. All faculty and staff in the department are invited to participate in the review process. Others providing input could include faculty from outside the department or College, alumni, students, and other interested parties from in or outside the University. Like all reviews, both positive and negative opinions are to be expected. The only input that will be considered in the evaluation is that which deals specifically with the ability and performance of the individual, not extraneous issues.

The evaluation will include a meeting with the department head early in the process to obtain from him/her a description of the personal goals and objectives that were followed over the past term. This information should highlight the areas where he/she believes progress has been made and may also include areas where progress has been less than desired. The department head will also provide an up-to-date resume.

Input from alumni, faculty outside the department, adjunct faculty, students, classified personnel, and other interested parties (industrial representatives, advisory board members, other university faculty and administrators) and the methods used to obtain this information will be solicited and considered at the discretion of the Evaluation Team. The Evaluation Team will also be responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all input.

The review will also consider the information generated by the ABET departmental review and by the external evaluation of the graduate program. Both of these reviews provide a view of the department by individuals that are external to the University. While these do not focus directly on the performance of the department head, they may provide useful information of the progress and direction of the department at both the graduate and undergraduate levels.

5.0 Reporting

The following procedure for reporting the results is recommended:

Based on the information received (questionnaires and oral communication), the Evaluation Team prepares a written summary with documentation for transmittal to the Dean.

The Dean meets with the Evaluation Team for an in-depth discussion and interpretation of the results.

The Dean and Chair of the Evaluation Team meet with the department head to present and discuss the results of the evaluation.

If necessary, the Evaluation Team meets to modify the report before delivery of the final document to the Dean.

The Dean communicates the findings in the final document to the department head.

The Dean and Evaluation Team meet with the departmental faculty and provide an appropriate overview of the department head evaluation.