

August 15, 2001

DEANS, DIRECTORS, DEPARTMENT CHAIRPERSONS, AND CAMPUS ADMINISTRATORS:

RE: Review of Voting/Peer Group Plans for Academic Federation Personnel Actions

The 2001-02 personnel cycle will begin soon with the issuance of the Academic Federation Annual Call for merits, promotions, and appraisals. In preparation, I am conducting a review of the new Voting/Peer Group plans for Academic Federation employees. The purpose of this review is to provide each unit with feedback on its plan prior to initiating Academic Federation personnel actions.

In his cover letter to last year's Academic Federation Annual Call, Vice Provost Klein announced changes to the personnel review process for all Academic Federation employees (other than the groups covered by collective bargaining agreements). Two of those changes make up what I refer to as the Voting/Peer Group plans: a description of the "voting procedure" to be used and the peer group identified for each Academic Federation employee in the unit.

First, clear documentation of the process used to evaluate Academic Federation members must be articulated in each personnel action. This includes the "voting procedure" used in informing the unit head regarding the proposed action. There must be some formal review with a vote for each personnel action. This could, for instance, be a vote of all academic members of a unit, or the vote of an appropriate ad hoc (peer) group appointed by the unit head. It is highly recommended that this voting group include one or more Academic Federation members. Files without a description of the nature of the voting group/procedure will be returned to the dean's office without further review.

Second, it is required that units identify a Peer Group for each Academic Federation employee. This collegial group of employees should include people with similar titles/responsibilities to those of the candidate(s). Units have much flexibility in how they can organize Peer Groups. Units can appoint an ad hoc Peer Group for each candidate or for multiple candidates, or if desired, a standing Peer Group can be established. The requirement for the Peer Group was optional last year and is required this year.

The purpose of the Peer Group is twofold: (1) It will serve as a review body for all personnel actions of each member of the designated group of individuals and hence will help foster consistency in the review of candidates with like duties; and (2) it will serve as an information vehicle whereby the group will provide feedback and guidance to the Academic Federation members. The advice of the Peer Group will be advisory only and will not be a substitute for the documented voting procedures of each unit. As such, the advice of the Peer Group will be provided as unofficial information to the unit head and to my office. The unit head may choose to make the advice of the Peer Group available to voting members of the unit prior to any vote.

Due to the nature of Academic Federation titles, it is expected that in some cases membership in the Peer Group will undergo significant turnover. For that reason, and for reasons of assuring an appropriately large Peer Group, units are advised to consider having Peer Groups for individuals in some titles with membership from several campus units. It is suggested that Peer Groups include a minimum of five members. Also, individuals should have some input into the composition of their Peer Group.

Feedback from my office on these two issues will be aimed at working through the problems that are sure to arise in implementing this process. To initiate the feedback process, I request that each unit with Academic Federation employees submit to me a brief written plan containing information on both voting procedures and the Peer Groups to be used for those employees. I request that those plans be submitted at your earliest convenience so as to facilitate a productive feedback process prior to the commencement of the 2001-02 personnel cycle. The feedback provided by my office will include input from the appropriate Academic Federation personnel committee, as well as my assessment of the plan.

Questions regarding the plans can be directed to Steve Blank, Assistant Vice Provost-Academic Personnel, at 2-4827. Thank you for your help in providing your colleagues with a consistent and collegial personnel system.

Barbara A. Horwitz  
Vice Provost--Academic Personnel

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