

To: The Faculty

From: C.L. Max Nikias, Executive Vice President and Provost
Michael Nichol, President of the Academic Senate

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Subject: Individual development plans

At the proposal of the Academic Senate, during 2005-06 the provost announced increased programs to support faculty growth and development. In a 2007 update to that initiative, the Academic Senate President and the provost jointly wrote to the faculty:

“At the request of Ann Crigler, President of the Senate, following her meeting with the Medical Faculty Assembly, the provost’s office has agreed to work with schools on providing individualized development plans for faculty, including long-term associate professors who wish to seek promotion, others who might want to change directions in their careers, those who need help trying to jump start their careers, and any faculty who would benefit from such plans.”

Some USC schools have been using individual development plans for a decade. Schools and the provost’s office have been cooperating to provide such plans, with good results. Based on that experience, the attached policy updates what the university has been doing and makes the information broadly available so that individuals, chairs or deans can initiate development plans for faculty who would benefit from them.

These efforts have a long background. Faculty accountability was the subject of a 1997 Academic Senate white paper. The Senate returned to the principles of Faculty Responsibilities several times beginning with the 1998 edition of the Faculty Handbook. In 2000, a joint Academic Senate-provost committee proposed the use of individual development plans for faculty whose work has not been satisfactory, and after extensive consideration by the Senate, the provost adopted the proposal in the university policy on Faculty Evaluation. Experience since then has shown the usefulness of individual development plans as part of a broader program to support faculty growth and development.

Policy on Individual Development Plans

Individual Development Plans may be considered at the suggestion of either the individual or the chair or dean, for those faculty who would benefit from such plans. Here are some examples: faculty who want to change directions in their careers, who regard themselves as overdue for promotion, whose research agendas would benefit from reinvigoration, who seek preparation for administrative assignments, who want to merit higher compensation, who have not been satisfactorily productive for a noticeable period, or who have been rated low by faculty merit committees.

When an individual development plan is considered, the dean or dean's representative should meet with the individual for consultation to work towards formulating an individualized plan for development, including guidance and assistance as appropriate. The Provost's Office should be drawn on for its experience, and the Academic Senate President is available to offer advice.

Types of development plans:

Different types of development plans may be appropriate for different faculty. Sometimes the individual wants to jump start a new focus and is seeking support for a plan of action, and sometimes a chair or dean thinks that a person would benefit from a change in work activities.

Promotion:

It may be that, upon review of the record of an associate professor, the individual appears to have already fulfilled the criteria for promotion. If so, a dossier should be prepared for consideration at the department and school level, and should be submitted to the University Committee on Appointments, Promotions and Tenure by the next deadline for full professor promotions (October 15).

Annual Merit Review:

Annual merit reviews should recognize and reward faculty who merit higher compensation. Meeting the expectations of an individual development plan can be an important factor in such reviews.

Changing Activity Profile:

The Faculty Handbook explains that faculty should have activity profiles in which teaching, research and service add up to 100%.

The university policy on Evaluation of Faculty says: If the individual has been performing more or less teaching, research or service than is typical in the school, the chair, after consultation, may adjust the profile so that the total effort amounts to full-time service.

An individual who, for example, is performing less research than typical, needs a profile that involves more teaching or service in order to compensate for the reduced research activity. In setting the activity profiles, it is expected that there will be consultation between the faculty member and the dean or chair of the academic unit, and that the proportion of activity spent in different academic pursuits would vary with the demands of the specific academic unit.

The Faculty Handbook says that the average activity profile of a full-time tenure-track or tenured faculty member is approximately 35-45% each of teaching and research and 5-15% of service, and that actual percentages may vary. For example, there may be good reason that a profile allocates 70-90% to either teaching or research. (Nevertheless, the Handbook states that each individual still is expected to make a significant contribution in each of the three areas of responsibility, and the provost's permission should be sought for any exception to that expectation).

Research:

A successful plan to help the individual's research career may require any of the following: various forms of support from the department, including perhaps a period of reduced teaching load or service responsibilities, opportunities for collaboration, or specific research mentoring. The dean or chair or senior colleagues may be able to define clearly for the faculty the expected pattern of research productivity so that the individual can be considered for promotion.

Teaching:

If the individual has been performing, and is likely to continue to perform, less research than is expected in the school, the dean or the chair, after consultation with the faculty member, should adjust the individual's profile so that the total effort amounts to a full-time contribution. Increased teaching responsibilities should be assigned, unless major administrative responsibilities are appropriate.

The possibility of variation in the profile provides a concrete recognition that faculty often can better serve the university and themselves if flexibility in focus is allowed over the course of a career. Those who carry heavier than usual teaching responsibilities, and are highly effective in doing so, will be recognized for their

contribution. Their annual performance will be reviewed in accord with the individual profile of what is expected of them.

The Faculty Handbook provides the following: Faculty are expected to teach courses that have been assigned to them by the department chair, after consultation with department faculty, on the basis of departmental or school needs. Teaching, clinical, and service assignments shall not be made for discriminatory or retaliatory reasons. Claims that assignments violate this or any other provision of the Faculty Handbook, other University policies, or provisions of law are subject to review through the grievance procedure, but contested teaching and clinical assignments shall be performed pending any such review.

Service:

Some faculty may wish to consider a period of their careers in which they take on administrative responsibilities substantially above the usual 5-15%. A school may be able to offer administrative assignments allowing the individual to make a significant contribution, and to acquire skills and experience preparing the faculty member for greater responsibilities.

Clinical Service:

For faculty in clinical departments, after considering how the individual may best make a contribution and after consultation with the affected individual, the chair or dean may make different or smaller or additional clinical assignments. If there is disagreement between the chair and the individual about the assignment, the chair or dean will also consult a standing or *ad hoc* department or school faculty committee, with the possibility of further review through the grievance procedure, but contested clinical assignments shall be performed pending any such review.

Transition to Other Activities:

If faculty members' interests have shifted so much that full-time University work is no longer being performed, the individual may wish to consider transition to other non-University activities, and there can be an agreed termination of the faculty appointment. Faculty may take advantage of the provisions designed to facilitate the transition to retirement set out in the section on Phased Retirement in the Faculty Handbook. Information on retirement policies and opportunities are available in a separate brochure.

Change in Quantity or Quality of Work Done:

It may be that an individual is not performing at a satisfactory level, but neither the faculty member nor dean believe that a change in the activity profile would be helpful. In such cases, after consultation with the faculty member, the dean should provide a development plan that clearly defines the expectations for satisfactory service, and offers help and support (of the kind mentioned below) toward meeting those expectations.

Follow-up for the development plan.

Following the consultation with the faculty member about the individual development plan, the dean should send the individual a memo outlining the work expectations, including specific and concrete details. Under the policies mentioned above, after consultation the individual's profile may be adjusted so that the total effort amounts to full-time service, and courses may be assigned that the individual is expected to teach. Annual follow-up memos should be provided to the faculty member from the dean to confirm that the faculty member is on track to meet those expectations, or to note that issues remain. If the individual is not meeting expectations, the dean should give him or her warning as provided in the Faculty Handbook if the level of performance suggests neglect of duty or incompetence.¹ If the individual is meeting or exceeding expectations, that factor should be taken account of in the annual merit review and setting of compensation. The provost's office should be kept informed, and the Academic Senate president is available for consultation.

By working with faculty who would benefit from development plans, departments and schools aim to assist them in obtaining, as appropriate to the individual, more satisfaction in their careers, promotion, enhanced compensation, return to full-time satisfactory performance of their duties, or rethinking of their careers. Colleagues

¹ There may unfortunately be some rare cases where disciplinary action is appropriate. In such instances, the Faculty Handbook provides that a faculty committee can recommend whether there is adequate cause, either serious enough to begin the dismissal process for a tenured faculty member, or not that serious but nevertheless warranting a cut in core pay up to 10%, to be reconsidered annually. Additionally, under the university policy on evaluation, if a faculty committee has made four consecutive annual ratings of not satisfactory, that in itself would strongly suggest cause for dismissal. Also, under the Faculty Handbook the dean retains the responsibility of considering whether to initiate the process for determining whether there has been serious neglect of duty or incompetence, justifying beginning the dismissal process of a tenured faculty member. Tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty are also subject to non-reappointment as provided in the Faculty Handbook

and programs at the department, school and university level are available to offer mentoring and support for faculty to assist them in all aspects of their work.

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

- **Center for Excellence in Research**
<http://www.usc.edu/research/about/vp/cer/>
- **Center for Excellence in Teaching**
<http://www.usc.edu/cet>
- **Mentoring Forum & Networks** - to seek mentoring relationships, contact the department chair, director of faculty development, associate dean, or associate provost for faculty development
- **Academic Leadership & Development** – see calendar of workshops at <http://www.usc.edu/faculty>