Academy of Distinguished Teachers
Status of Teaching in Merit Assessment Working Group
Retreat Notes

Sunday, October 12, 2003

Present: Vern Cardwell (convener), Karen Zentner Bacig, Linda Miller Cleary

Reviewed retreat notes from 2002.

Had one working group meeting in fall 2002. Discussed possible project in which we develop faculty profiles and would have department heads rank them in terms of performance. Attempt to see how people would rank people relative to emphases on teaching versus research. Are these people rewarded differentially?

Profiles:
• Feeling that department chairs would participate if it came out of Craig’s office. Would feel compelled.
• Teaching loads would be different on the different campuses. Duluth’s teaching loads would be higher and so the drafted profiles might be difficult for them to complete.
• Not all departments have specifically spelled out splits in terms of the percentages of time devoted to teaching, research and service.
• Could we do a pilot of this approach to see what happens? See who are chairs in the ADT currently and ask them to pilot and give us feedback.

Survey and Focus Group Interviews
• Survey questions are based on a survey done by the AHC a few years ago.
• Sent to working group members in July for feedback. Received two responses, both negative – survey too long!
• Wonder if the survey really would take that long? It would be online and radio-button, yes/no questions.

Key questions:
• Do we want to pursue something and if so, what? The survey explores procedural issues and the profiles are about the judgments people would make.
• Focus only on undergraduate teaching? YES! To include graduate education confounds the questions, given that part of graduate education is so tied to research.
• Two focus groups – one with faculty and one, using profiles, with department chairs.
Next steps:

- Ask department heads within the ADT from each campus to pilot survey questionnaire. Dan from UMC.
  **ACTION:** Vern will draft letter and send to Karen to be sent to department heads. Vern’s letter will recap retreat discussion and resend materials sent this summer, as well as ask for a core group who are interested and willing to be active in this project. Ask department chairs to respond to survey draft by November 15.
  **ACTION:** Karen will send out to all on ADT letterhead. All committee members will be copied.
  **ACTION:** Linda will send Karen list of UMD ADT department chairs (done at retreat).
  **ACTION:** Karen will ask Engin to identify UMM ADT department chairs.
  **ACTION:** Karen will ask UMTC HR to id UMTC ADT department chairs.
  Then, revise survey and arrange videoconference to review survey and finalize.
  **ACTION:** Karen will take finalized questionnaire to IRR to have put on web (January deadline) for January administration.
  **ACTION:** Karen will revise study timeline.
  Maybe two focus groups – one with faculty and one with profiles for department heads.
  Text box at end of survey for comments that might be triggered by other questions.
  **ACTION:** Karen will send Cynthia’s questionnaire feedback to Linda and Vern.
  Ask for support from Craig, Vince, Fritz and Doug on each campus and ask that they send the letter asking for folks to participate in the survey. Share the study plan with them.
  **ACTION:** Karen and Vern can set up meeting with Craig to talk to him first and then ask Craig to communicate with Vince, Fritz and Doug about their support of their campuses.

Benefits:

- Issues of morale wrapped up in these issues.
- Communicates the message that we care about teaching. Message to department head, to central administration, to faculty.
- Important to document what is going on and what people believe about these issues.