A Process for Revisiting Faculty Evaluation: Situational Factors

As campuses begin the work of reviewing and realigning faculty evaluation processes, a diverse group of relevant campus stakeholders (e.g., administrative leaders, department chairs, faculty governance committee, tenure committee, or an ad hoc group of faculty leaders from all ranks) should consider the questions below first to assess the situational factors for each level and then to identify how current faculty evaluation policies and procedures align with those factors.

**Institution-level**

*Situation Factors*

1. What are our institutional values? Here are two resources that can assist in addressing this question: “Understanding Our Core Values: An Exercise for Individuals and Teams” and “Scope of the Living Values Themselves: A Prospectus of Possibilities for Institutional Choice.”
2. Where are these institutional values articulated (e.g., mission statement, recruitment materials, etc.)?
3. What institutional claims/promises do we make to students? What knowledge, skills, and attitudes do we say we cultivate in our students and for what ultimate purpose(s)?
4. In what ways are our faculty members expected to uphold these values and promises? Are these institutional values and promises valued in our faculty evaluation procedures?
5. Do the expectations of faculty articulated in a variety of documents (listed below) align with the expectations outlined in our faculty evaluation policies and procedures?
   a. Position advertisements
   b. New faculty orientation/ongoing professional development
   c. Faculty handbook, including annual evaluation and tenure policies.
   d. Faculty meetings
   e. Department meetings, retreats, and website
   f. Social gatherings
   g. Curriculum (e.g., General Education)

**Faculty Evaluation on the Institutional Level**

1. How do we currently evaluate faculty on these institution-level priorities? For example, if personalized attention (e.g., high-quality advising) is a top priority, how is it valued and assessed in the faculty evaluation process?
2. Do the faculty evaluation policies, procedures, and documents (e.g., faculty handbook) align with the institutional values, claims, and promises?
3. Have awards or denial of tenure and promotion in the last 10 years been equitable and unbiased? How would we be able to tell one way or the other?
4. Is resource distribution consistent with the institutional values and expectations for faculty?

**Department-level**

*Situation Factors*

1. What are our departmental values? Where are these values articulated (e.g., department handbooks, etc.)? Are these values aligned with our institutional values?
2. What expectations does the department have for its faculty? Where are they articulated? Are they aligned with departmental and institutional values and the claims/promises we make to students?
3. Are there evaluation criteria that are implicit or otherwise unstated (e.g., good citizenship)? If so, why aren’t these criteria explicitly stated and aligned with faculty expectations?
4. Is the work we value distributed equitably with consideration of rank, gender, and racial or other identity group?
5. Are we sensitive and appropriately appreciative of “hidden work” that may place additional burdens on some individuals or groups?
6. How do we message our values and priorities (e.g., in email, chair requests, social gatherings, public shaming)?

**Faculty Evaluation on the Departmental Level**
1. When a colleague is struggling, how do we support them? How/when do we escalate/communicate this need to the administration/institution level?
2. How do we currently evaluate faculty on the departmental level? At what points? What documents and processes are created?
3. Do the faculty evaluation instruments on the departmental level align with the values, claims/promises, and faculty expectations articulated in our other documents?
4. Are there evaluation criteria that are implicit or otherwise unstated? If so, why aren’t these criteria explicitly stated and aligned with departmental expectations for faculty?
5. Is how we have recommended tenure and promotion at the departmental level in the last 10 years equitable and unbiased? How would we be able to tell one way or the other?

**Individual-level**

**Situational Factors**
1. What does being a good colleague mean at our institution? Where is this articulated? Is this aligned with departmental/institutional values and expectations?
2. What do we do in a given week to prepare for teaching? Where/how does this happen (see this [James Lang article](#) for a process), and how is this work valued in evaluation?
3. Are the amount and accessibility of resources available to individual faculty members (e.g., time, funding, non-financial support, etc.) consistent with departmental/institutional values and expectations for faculty productivity in their area of scholarship or professional productivity?
4. Are the amount and accessibility of resources available to individual faculty members (e.g., time, funding, non-financial support, etc.) consistent with claims/promises made to students?

**Faculty Evaluation on the Individual Level**
1. Are individuals provided with opportunities for self-reflection/self-evaluation? At what points? What documents are created?
2. If individuals are struggling to meet goals (e.g., due to care-giving needs), is it clear how to seek and receive support? How are the individual’s concerns communicated to the departmental and/or institutional level?
3. Are individuals prompted to highlight departmental/institutional values and expectations in our self-reflections/self-evaluations?
4. In our self-reflections/self-evaluations, are we prompted to highlight ways we have helped effect departmental and/or institutional claims/promises made to students?
5. In our self-reflections/self-evaluations, are we prompted to highlight accomplishments that may not be explicitly requested? If not, why not?
6. Have our self-reflections/self-evaluations in the last 10 years been assessed by others in an equitable and unbiased manner? How would we be able to tell one way or the other?