Post Tenure Review of Department Chairs

Conducted by Survey Monkey

March 2014
To what college(s) does your department report?

Total responses = 38

- College of Business: 5.3%
- College of Liberal Arts and Sciences: 42.1%
- College of Human Sciences: 7.9%
- College of Agriculture and Life Sciences: 28.9%
- College of Design: 7.9%
- College of Veterinary Medicine: 5.3%
- College of Engineering: 13.2%
Since the change in PTR was implemented in Jan 2011, how many faculty reviews has your department conducted?

- None: 5.3%
- 1-3: 42.1%
- 4-6: 39.5%
- 7-10: 13.2%
- more than 10: 5.3%

N=38
In your department, who conducts the PTR?

- 57.6%: Elected faculty committee
- 39.4%: Faculty committee appointed by Dean
- 3.0%: Faculty committee appointed by Department Chair
- 0.0%: Faculty committee appointed by another committee

N=33
Who conducts.... comments

• Departmental P&T committee
• The tenured faculty in the department.
• in consultation with the faculty member to exclude conflicts
• All full professors who are not under PTR during the current year
• Faculty committee partly elected partly appointed by chair
• Part elected, part appointed by the chair
A summary of activities over the review period
A dossier
A full CV
Truncated CV
Annual review letters
Teaching evaluations
Artifacts of teaching
Manuscripts/published works
Letters of recommendation
Other

In your department what materials are required to be submitted by the candidate?

Yes  No  Optional
What materials.... comments

• Creative activity record, scholarship of engagement in research and teaching
• Yearly written evaluations from elected evaluation committee for the past seven years. Also, ratings from this elected committee
• Annual faculty activity reports for the period of review
• PRS, letter from person undergoing review on past performance and future plans
• This question is hard to answer; basically, we have a CV, a somewhat less extensive summary explaining achievements and future goals, plus syllabi and "artifacts of teaching effectiveness/projects at discretion of candidate. Overall, it's a somewhat smaller "dossier" than a tenure package, but more extensive than an annual report.
Has your department defined specific criteria for the PTR ranking of 'superior'?

- Yes: 35.1%
- In process: 24.3%
- No, but we talked about it: 32.4%
- No, and we are not planning to do it: 8.1%

N=37
Defined superior.. comments

• no more than 10% of all senior faculty may get this rating

• Again, the choices here are a bit restricting in answering. I wouldn't say we've had an extensive discussion about it, basically we've just started implementing the procedure as handed down from on high. However, I think there are some really problems with "specific criteria".
Has your department defined specific criteria for the PTR ranking of 'below expectations'?

- Yes: 26.3%
- In process: 15.8%
- No, but we talked about it: 34.2%
- No, and we are not planning to do it: 23.7%

N=38
Defined below expectations.. comments

• Faculty have quite different PRS's so this is difficulty to quantify. We believe there is a good consensus among the full professors about what constitute below expectations performance.

• Our committee relies on the PRS to define expectations

• See above.
From your experience how would you rank the following statements about the faculty committee's role in the PTR process?

- Fair and balanced
- Influenced by rank and stature
- More likely to rank superior
- More likely to rank below expectations
- Do not have sufficient information
- Are more critical
- Are less critical
- Not willing to put negative comments
- Very willing to put negative comments

[Bar chart with categories and ranking options]
Faculty review role.... comments

• While we have not had much occasion to submit "negative" comments, the faculty on these PTR committees are most willing to submit critical comments that would be deemed negative.

• Cannot answer all questions here

• They work very hard to be fair, but rely on the faculty member to describe contributions and to provide context

• I think an agree/disagree format would make these questions easier to answer.

• There is a conflict of interest in this process so faculty find it difficult to be objective
In your department, does the full faculty (assume rank or above)

- Have access to the candidates' materials: 70.0%
- Formally review the candidates' materials: 50.0%
- Vote on the candidates' performance: 70.0%
- Vote on the candidates' performance only if there is a grievance: 10.0%

N=17
Does the full faculty.. comments

• Only the committee and chair are involved.
• Only the PTR committee has access to the candidate's materials
• the full faculty do not conduct the review; do not have access to the candidate's materials
• only the peer review committee reviews the PTR information
• none of the above
• Only the committee reviews this material
• None of the above
• Entire process handled by an elected committee. Full faculty is not involved.
• No
• The full faculty does not vote or review materials in PTR
• only the PTR committee
• NO
• just the committee reviews and votes
• DO not understand this question
In your experience, have PTR committees been consistent in identifying faculty who are performing 'below expectations'?

- Yes, they have used this ranking consistently: 48.0%
- No, they do not use this ranking consistently: 52.0%

N=25
Identifying below expectations.. comments

- Not enough data to indicate any trend
- no data on which to base an opinion
- This is a poorly worded question. I believe that our PTR committees have considered the use of "below expectations" appropriately but have not had the occasion to use it to date.
- not applicable; hasn't happened yet
- n/a in my department
- It has never occurred
- This has never happened, nothing to judge by
- Hard to say. We are only talking about 2 years of rankings
- It has not been necessary yet.
- we have not had any such candidates
- So far, only one case
- too soon to tell. Underperformers are rare at the rank of Full Prof.
- Too soon to tell.
- Well, ONCE of three reviews isn't either 'consistent' or 'inconsistent'
- N/A
- 3 cases does not give me enough room to apply consistent
If the PTR committee does rank as 'below expectations' who creates and implements the improvement plan?

N=31
Improvement plan... comments

• The Chair works with the faculty member to create the plan.
• plus the chair of the review committee
• PTR committee chair and chair create. Chair implements.
• N/A so far
• The creation of the improvement plan is supposed to be a joint exercise between the PTR Committee Chair, the Department Chair and the Candidate. The PTR committee chair can rotate from year to year and cases to case, so the Department Chair must manage implementation of the plan.
• Chair + Chair of PTR committee
• The chair of the PTR and the department chair work with the faculty member to develop a plan
• also done in cooperation with the affected faculty
• N/A to date
• Haven't had to do one yet, am working on first now. I'm wanting it to be jointly created, with Chair "implementing". IMHO, the reviewer is the person who is "implementing" the plan; the chair is probably the "enforcer"
The current PTR policy links a possible salary increase (if all aspects of the PRS are ranked superior) to the peer review process. Do you think having a salary increase potential is appropriate for the PTR process?

- No, the salary increase issue confounds the process for PTR committees: 63.2%
- No, salary increase decisions should be made by the Department Chair: 36.8%
- Yes, it is appropriate for the salary increase to be linked to superior performance: 23.7%
- Yes, the salary increase makes the PTR process worthwhile for high performing faculty: 15.8%

N=38
Salary increase appropriate... comments

• most ridiculous development yet in the evolution of the PTR process
• The superior rating is extremely destructive to faculty morale, collegiality, and retention. This is perhaps the worst policy ever created by the Faculty Senate and it should be eliminated before it does further harm.
• I don't really like the requirement of a superior rating in all categories. Some outstanding faculty are not selected for the raise.
• The salary increase and the superior rating should go away.
• It increases pressure on the PTR committee, and they don't always have all the information that they would need to make salary decisions.
• I don't like the it has to be 'superior' in all categories... There are stellar people who deserve to be recognized but aren't superior in all categories.
• Salary decisions are basically made by the Dean; the chair recommends but these are overruled by the dean. So this is not all that relevant.
• Faculty have said to me that if they recommend a raise, there will be less money for their own raises. CONFLICT OF INTEREST
If your PTR committee has identified a candidate as superior in all aspects of the PRS, what was your response in your letter to the Dean?

- I fully agreed with the assessment and confirmed 'superior' in my letter to the Dean
- I somewhat agreed with the assessment but confirmed 'superior' in my letter to the Dean
- I somewhat agreed with the assessment but did not confirm 'superior' in my letter to the Dean
- I disagreed with the assessment but confirmed 'superior' in my letter to the Dean
- I disagreed with the assessment and did not confirm 'superior' in my letter to the Dean

N=22
Agree with superior….comments

- Have not had a superior rating issue come up so far
- I had not had any superior since 2011
- n/a
- Had to change the recommendation because the faculty member was deemed as "meets" expectations for a minor component of the PRS (e.g., Service to University - meets expectation)
- Our committee has reviewed our best faculty and found none to be truly superior in all three categories. We seem to have higher standards than other Departments. The lack of uniform standards across the university is a big problem.
- What letter to the Dean?
- has not happened
- Has not happened yet.
- We haven't ranked anyone superior.
- not applicable
- so far this is the case
- have not yet encountered this
- Have not had one of these
- NA
Some Chairs have shared concerns that the current PTR process negatively affects the morale of high performing faculty. In your experience, have you observed any of the following?

- Faculty that were ranked as 'meeting expectations' felt peers did not value them (50.0%)
- Faculty that were ranked as 'meeting expectations' felt peers had unrealistic expectations (26.9%)
- Faculty that were ranked as 'superior' in the major area of their PRS, but not all areas felt they will never be ranked 'superior' overall (69.2%)
Morale...comments

• The overall reaction appears to be one of indifference because faculty believe that PTR is an exercise in futility
• No
• no data on which to base an opinion
• The fact that someone with a 5% effort in Service is deemed "meets" expectations but is superior in research that is 80% of the PRS, makes it impossible to be ranked as superior over all. Each portion of the PRS cannot be evenly weighted.
• Not observed
• The exercise in judging superior performance has been extremely destructive to faculty morale
• in both cases to date, both rated superior in all areas
• NA
• have not yet encountered this
• This is a divisive policy and needs changing. It also is very simple to fix. That is, unlink it to salary, and remove the category of superior. The latter is redundant with the annual salary increment process anyway.
• I think this issue varies for full vs. associate professors. I can say faculty who were ranked below expectations had it negatively affect their morale, perhaps unfoundedly.
• NA
In your experience, do you think that PTR committees may rank colleagues 'superior' with the intent that they too will be ranked 'superior' when they undergo PTR?

- Yes, I know that has happened: 37.8%
- Yes, I suspect that has happened: 35.1%
- No, I know that has not happened: 27.0%
- No, I don't think it has happened, but I am not sure: 0.0%

N=37
Superior rank intent... comments

• I think the committee is trying to be fair.
• I do not know. My people take it pretty seriously
If the PTR process could be modified, which of the following process would you like to see implemented?

- Keep it the same: 21.2%
- Same but delete Superior and no salary: 6.1%
- Review by committee, Rank by chair, keep superior and salary: 3.0%
- Review by committee, Rank by chair, no superior and no salary: 3.0%
- Chair reviews and ranks: 15.2%
- Same process but no ranking: 51.5%

N=33
Modified…. comments

• I think the current peer review process is the best approach, otherwise it is just a 7 year report by the Chair based on the previous annual reports. However, there needs to be an adjustment to the "superior" in all categories. For someone to be deemed superior in all potential categories is largely unrealistic. There needs to be a "weighted" process based on the PRS.

• Keep it the same, but do not require superior in all three areas for a salary increase. A faculty member can be spectacular in one or two areas and merit recognition.

• Wow, none of these are very fun. Maybe keep process the same but eliminate ranking from all levels.

• If you keep the salary benefit, remove the overall ranking so that there is no ambiguity about it having to be superior in all areas.
Other comments....

- PTR is good only to the extent that a connection can be established between the annual review with the Chair and there is accountability. Neither of these are happening at present.
- Clarity is needed regarding how to treat faculty who have been in "chair," "dean" or "director" positions. I have four faculty in that position and are due for PTR according to the accrued time, but their is no guidance from the faculty handbook regarding how to treat that time. Does it deduct from the time for PTR, should that time be included but evaluated by a different criteria. I feel my hands are tied until the university (not my department) makes a uniform decision about how to treat these cases.
- Overall the process is bland and ineffective. It commends everyone uniformly, independent of true performance.
- It is easy to consider someone superior in research (70 to 80 % effort) because the accomplishments are easily quantified. To be deemed superior because someone served on an Admissions Committee (5 to 10 % effort), for example, is less quantifiable. Currently, the minor component of the PRS carries as much weight; this needs to be addressed.
- The PTR policy in its current form is not serving the intended purpose of safeguarding against abuse of the tenure system. PTR was implemented as a response to a perception that tenured faculty may abuse this privilege to perform unsatisfactorily without having to face full repercussions. As such, PTR is a valuable tool to defend the tenure system in the future, and with it academic freedom. Somehow during the development of the policy, this intent of the policy has been adulterated to become a tool to reward performance. We already have these tools!! And including this aspect into the PTR process takes away from what we really want to accomplish. On top of that, this aspect now requires the futile exercise of trying to objectively define a very subjective assessment, namely what exactly is superior. Good luck! More busy work, more wasted time and more unhappy faculty.
• If the intention of the PTR process is to identify under performing faculty, then we should just rate faculty as meeting expectations or not meeting expectations and develop improvement plans for faculty not meeting expectations. Telling faculty they are not superior is extremely destructive to faculty morale and retention of high performing faculty. It invites comparison to other faculty and the types of ratings coming our of other departments with lower standards. We desperately need to do away with the superior rating before it does more damage.

• I think it is a bit premature (only two years) to generalize about the current PTR process. Let's do this survey again in about 2 years.

• Allow more flexibility in superior rating. Some fabulous scholars should not be expected to do much service; some fabulous scholars and service providers don't teach exceptionally well.

• With the current system, there is some "grade inflation" as the committee seeks to limit hard feelings. Also, they don't have enough info to make the really tough decisions (eg. below expectations). The process feels punitive to the high-achieving faculty who receive "superior" in some categories, but not all. This is especially concerning, as it makes valued colleagues feel unappreciated.

• Need to establish how important institutional service is in the PTR process

• The problem with the salary increase is that there are none in LAS worth the bother. Superior ranking sounds great, but the money that accompanies it isn't all that much since the base salary of any humanities and social science professor is low to begin with.
• The foregoing recommendation that I checked would be highly effective in addressing the major concerns I have. That is, keep PTR about the same, but eliminate the superior ranking, and eliminate the salary increase.

• I think the peer evaluation is useful. I think there's a bias in the survey above toward PTR for full professors, as associate professors don't get a salary increase, so the fact that you are most concerned about salary increases tells me you're not thinking about associate professors. And the PTR review for associate professors needs to help send a message upstairs that they are not being supported by the system. Associate professors are the work horses in our department--mentoring junior faculty, picking up administrative work due to winnowing of staff, advising students, and picking up slack that full professors don't do. And they are not being promoted because they aren't getting research done because they are doing the rest of the business of the university. The problem with PTR is it's viewed by EVERYONE, upstairs and downstairs, as a punitive process. And slapping the possibility of a salary raise on top of it does not make it less punitive; it just makes it more unfair. Overall, positive tenure review is not equal to a job performance evaluation and this university is trying to conflate the two, and turn tenure review (on all levels) into this process. So long as we value research/scholarship above all else at the university level, there will continue to be a disjunct and unhappiness about all of these processes, because our day-to-day jobs include significant other activities. One cannot apply/graft the business model of performance review onto the tenure process and expect happy results.

• If the purpose of PTR is to put teeth in not meeting expectations, then the superior and the concomitant raise should be eliminated. However, it seems to me that annual reviews should suffice for tenured faculty and that two below expectations in a row begins some sort of more serious process.